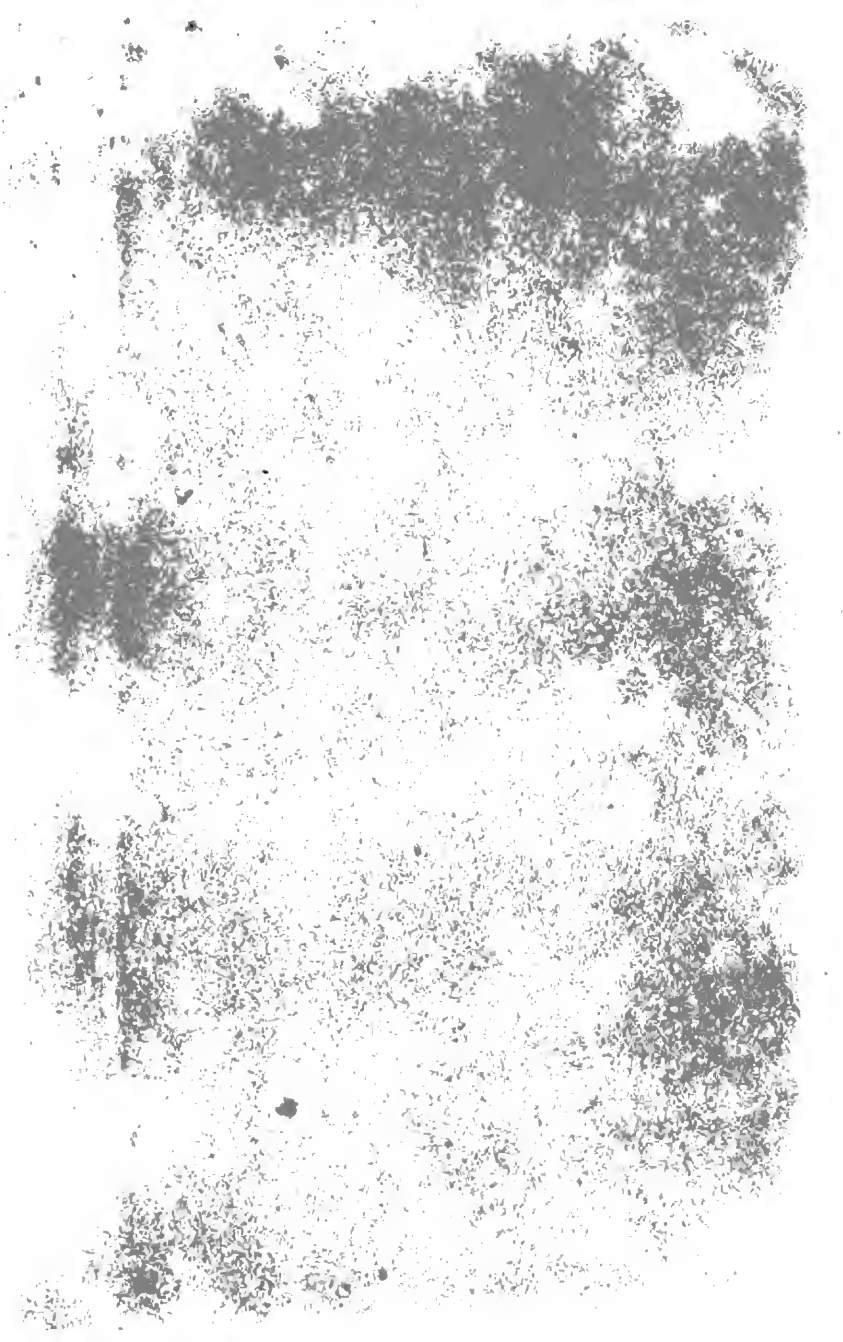


An ornate, symmetrical decorative border in a dark, textured ink. It features intricate scrollwork, leaf-like motifs, and a central vertical element at the bottom that resembles a stylized fleur-de-lis or a crest. The border frames the title and author's name.

# THE THRESHOLD

MARJORIE  
BENTON  
COOKE









# THE THRESHOLD



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JOAN BABCOCK

*"She was rewarded for her efforts to do them proud.  
Gregory looked really startled and Dick became incoherent."*

# The Threshold

By MARJORIE BENTON COOKE

AUTHOR OF

"The Girl Who Lived in the Woods,"

"Cinderella Jane," Etc.



With Frontispiece in Colors

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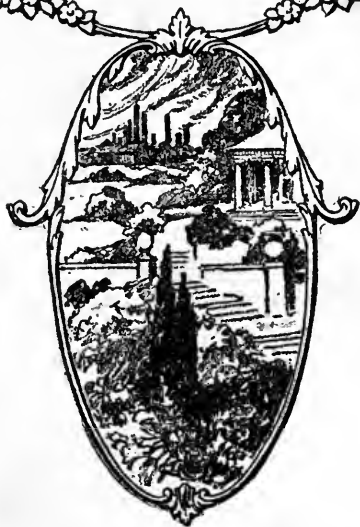
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# THE THRESHOLD







# THE THRESHOLD

## CHAPTER I

**J**OAN BABCOCK felt the urge of the Evangel. It was her heritage, perhaps, from a visionary father; it was most certainly the outgrowth of "that state of life to which it had pleased God to call her." There are spirits conceived and born in revolt; such was her spirit.

As she turned the key in the door of the cottage, where the first chapter of her life had been lived, she turned it just as surely on that past. She visualized swiftly the years that had gone before, the experiences and emotions, shut up, now, in that empty house to be left behind.

She walked quickly down the sordid street of the industrial town, with a sense of release. She went into a store to leave the key for the agent of the house.

"Where ye going now, Joan?" he asked her.

"To Chicago."

"Goin' to get a job there?"

"Oh, yes, I hope so," she answered evasively.

"We'll miss ye down here."

"Thanks, Mike. I'll not forget my friends here."

Her real farewells had been said the night before. She was glad that her associates were all busy at the

mills, so she could go away without any more emotional strain. As she stood waiting for the train, she looked once more at the great foundries, with their huge chimneys piercing the haze of dirt and smoke that eternally surrounded them. The mammoth smelter burst into flames every few moments, like a volcanic eruption.

"They're like altar fires—the altar fires of Mammon, tended by the sweating, unthinking slaves of the system!" thought Joan.

Her father had been one of them, her mother too. Both had been sacrifices, the former in an accident, when, trying to save a fellow workman he had himself been killed; the latter through the death-dealing strain of monotonous, unending toil.

Once in her seat in the train Joan gave her thoughts free rein to hover over the immediate past. Three days before she had laid her mother away in the rest she had so sorely needed. She could not feel poignant grief that her mother's experience here had ended. There had been so little of joy, or comfort in her fifty years. Hope of anything different, anything better had died in her mother years before. She had become a dehumanized thing, an automaton, which worked and slept. She had never understood her husband's dreams, she blamed them for all his failures. No wonder that she was filled with bitterness, when the mantle of dreamer fell upon their only child.

That Joan put her beliefs into action—that where her father had preached, she practised—this was the significant fact that her mother failed to grasp. So it was, that Joan had closed those tired eyes with only gentle regret.

She sent her memory back to the days of her child-

hood when she had begun to understand things, to rebel. When she knew that life must give more than it gave to her family—to the people about them—or it was not worth having. She knew that her mother grumbled, that her father was resigned; that he read books from the library and talked about democracy, that he urged her to get an education, and then to rouse the workers of America to a realization of the country's need. She loved him and listened to him.

At the time when all the children of the town were put to work in the mills, Joan refused to go. She found a job in a store, where between serving customers, she could study. When she was fourteen she first heard about the University of Chicago, in the nearby city. She composed a letter to the President, telling him her ambitions, admitting her lack of money and urging him to tell her how she might earn a university education. He answered with a discouraging list of requirements for entrance. He suggested a correspondence course of preparation, in case she could not enter a regular preparatory school.

She took his advice, and three years of unremitting labour followed. Work at night, everything sacrificed to the god of her ambition, and then one day she said good-bye to Whiting, to her astonished mother and went to Chicago to get her education. By extreme economy, by living just over the line from starvation, doing outside work, she managed to make a living and keep up her work. She studied with absolute fervour. This was her one chance to raise herself above the level of Whiting, to graduate into a world where there was colour and leisure and happiness. She seized upon it so greedily that the end of her first year found her almost a nervous wreck. But she had caught the

attention of the faculty and some kindly professor investigated her way of living and put a stop to it. Clerical work in one of the faculty offices was arranged for her and this gave her some freedom. She was offered an opportunity for special service in one of the halls in return for a room and board there, so her second year had given her a first taste of real living. She was comfortably housed and nourished as to her body. Her mind was fed. A new need—a desire for companionship—appeared with the possession of some leisure. Joan looked about, for the first time really aware of her fellow students. The first year had been such a hand-to-hand fight for existence and her chance, that the human equation was lost sight of. But now she began to look into what you might call the social organization of the University.

Her discoveries did not surprise her. There were, as always, the privileged few. They were the well dressed, protected children of parents of means. They had clubs and societies and common social interests. Then there were all the rest, many of them self-supporting and ardent students like herself. They had debating societies and public forums in which they discussed the questions of the day. They had no time for afternoon teas and dances. A good many of these students, especially among the girls, were envious of that happy-go-lucky set, taking its opportunities so lightly. Some of them were bitter at their exclusion. But Joan was not one of these. If Whiting had not made her bitter, surely this play-world of the campus could not. She realized that it was important to keep sweet. She knew that she was not to be a part of the world in which these happy, careless students were to live. She knew that her lot was to be thrown in with the

workers of the world, so she taught herself to watch these others as one does a flock of butterflies on a summer's day.

There was one set she liked to speculate about. In her leisure moments she built romances about them. The heroine was a girl who lived in her Hall. Her name was Alice Kent. She was slight, and blond, with a tip-tilted nose and wonderful blue eyes. She was the "enfant terrible" of the dormitory, always up to some prank, always in trouble with the matron, or with her professors. She had beaux by the score, she rarely set foot upon the campus, unattended.

The most important scalp Miss Kent exhibited was that of a peerless male being, named Philip Morton. He was tall and thin, with wavy brown hair, like the man on the magazine covers. He affected a bored look, aided by sleepy eyes. His clothes were the talk of the campus. He was the social leader, par excellence, of his set. He was 99 per cent. pure hero, and the stuff that dreams are made of.

His rival in devotion to Miss Kent was the great Buck Porter, captain of the football team, a sort of campus demi-god, who made the hearts of the ladies flutter. He was a huge handsome creature.

None of these radiant beings ever glanced in Joan's direction, they did not so much as suspect her existence, but a continued story about them ran through Joan's dreams.

It was in the spring of her senior year that her mother's sudden death had called her home. The train was bearing her back to college for her last few months. Examinations were to be faced, and all the graduation ceremonies. After that—what? She had no relative left her. She was alone and free. She had no money

—she must make her own way, even if she married Edward. The prospect of work did not terrify her,—but marriage?

College had done much for her besides train her mind and store it with facts. It had given her a chance to test her powers in many ways. She knew that she had personality, that she could win friends easily. She had learned to value the fact that she was good to look at. She had learned how to dress on practically nothing, and perhaps most valuable of all, the University had opened to her the Book of Romance. This last year had brought her a lover.

He was an earnest young man in the Divinity School, named Edward Crane. It was perhaps their common purposefulness which had attracted them to each other. He was to devote his life to the service of men's souls, Joan was to devote hers to the service of their bodies—in so much as the improving of social conditions meant better and more comfortable living for the workers.

What began as intellectual fellowship had developed into love on the man's part. It was no small part of the many problems of these closing days at the University that Joan had to search her heart for an answer to Crane's love.

She distrusted herself, because she continually postponed her decision. How much of her response to him was the joy of her first companionship? How much of it was hunger for romance, for human affection? How much of it was due to spring and the swift running sap of youth, with its primal demands?

If she married Crane, could she do her work in conjunction with his—or would her effort always be interrupted by changes of his charges—be indirect because of the conditions in places where they might have to

live? Was she prepared to give up her work entirely, and merge herself in his? It was when she asked herself this direct question, that herself evaded the answer.

As the train drew into the station, she saw Crane on the platform waiting for her. His eager eyes, the marked features of his ascetic face, searched each car for her. His figure, slightly bent, leaned against a post, his shabby clothes flapping in the wind. Joan's heart went out to him, with a rush of maternal affection. His need of her was obvious. When he saw her, his whole face lighted and he hurried to her, taking her bag from her—bending to her with his whispered "Dear!"

"How good of you to come, Edward," she said.

"Joan—it broke my heart that you would not let me go home with you, on this sad errand—be of some help to you—"

"I know—but I just couldn't! I had to do it all alone," she said gravely, "but I'm grateful."

"Let's go over to the lake front—it's dashing up splendidly," he suggested, and she nodded assent.

They swung off at a good pace and into the wind. It whipped their clothes and stung their faces. Once on the esplanade they could barely move ahead and speech was impossible. The water was black—the sky sullen; great mountainous waves pounded in, to break across their very feet. They fought their way along the whole stretch, and then, blown but triumphant, they turned off into the park.

"Oh, that was wonderful!" cried Joan. "It makes you feel like Atlas, shouldering the world."

"That's a trifle too heroic for me," smiled Crane.

"Not for me! I knew every step along that walk,

that I could fight anything, be anything, conquer anything that life sets up for me to meet."

She stood there, her clothes wrapped tight about her straight boyish figure, her face flushed, her head lifted, and Edward Crane felt her vitality as one would an electric shock.

"Aren't we young and serious?" laughed the girl. "I'll conquer nothing, except perhaps my own spirit—but I know I'll be a fighter—till—I die!"

"Yes—I believe you belong to the conquerors of the world," he said. "I suppose that is why you fascinate me so, Joan. I only want to till God's little acre somewhere. How can I ever hope to make you content with that?" he said ruefully.

"Maybe, some day, I might be content to do that, but not now, not while I'm young and strong. I'm tired of being starved for the things I want, for travel and change and new people. I hated my life until I came to the University. If I hadn't made up my mind to come here, if I hadn't defied Whiting, I would have been an operator in the mills today, instead of a college graduate, with the world before me. I'm never going to submit, Edward, not to anything!"

"Not even to the will of God?"

"Not even to the will of God."

"Joan, don't, that's blasphemous!" he reproached her.

"How do you know what God's will is? Suppose I had thought it was God's will to stay on in the factories at Whiting, to be with my parents and do as they had done? But I didn't. I decided that God willed me to get an education, and make the most I could of my powers, to help the people back there in Whiting."



"Surely God would always will service."

"But I'm not setting forth, like a Christian martyr, dedicated to service, Edward, for the sake of serving. I want to help the workers because I know their needs, but I intend to work out my own salvation, in the process of rousing them."

"You're going out to fight the good fight," he persisted.

"It's up to me whether it's a good fight, saith the woman unto the preacher," she retorted impudently. He smiled, even while he deprecated her levity.

"Joan, Joan, mine is the case of the ground hog that loved the singing lark!" he sighed.

"Lark? I'm no lark—I'm a Cat-bird. Caw, caw!" She mimicked the harsh complaint of that most pestiferous bird, and Crane threw back his head and laughed.

These two inconspicuous units in the student mass were tasting their first romance, and it was sweet.

## CHAPTER II

**M**ISS RUTH EARL sat in her office, dictating letters to a secretary. She was small and slight and prim, as an old-fashioned flower is prim. Her New England ancestors had registered their mark on her countenance and demeanour. The members of her staff looked up to her, respected her, were a trifle in awe of her. The patrons of the Professional Women's Bureau over which she presided, all relied upon her intelligence and her efficiency, but it would have been an unbearable shock to any of these people who came in daily contact with her, to learn that Miss Ruth Earl was possessed of a man's size sense of humour. Her friends discovered that back of what might be called the New England imprint, was a warm heart, a quick sympathy, a love of colour and fun.

Mr. Gregory Farwell was announced. With a nod, Miss Earl dismissed the stenographer, and looked up at the tall, rather imposing man who came into the office.

"Good morning, Mr. Farwell," said the head of the Bureau.

"Good morning, madam," announced the gentleman with a bow. He seated himself with a courtliness of manner, holding his hat and cane.

"I understand that you supply professional and educated women for every demand—"

"Well, we try to," smiled Miss Earl.

"Then I should like to explain my situation to you,"

he began, and Miss Earl drew a note book toward her, and bowed gravely.

"I am a bachelor. My home is in Farwell. I am the owner of mills and factories in the town, which necessitate my making my home near by."

"Yes?"

"My house is rather large. My family consists, or has consisted up to the present time of my nephew, a lad of seventeen, Miss Arethusa Jenks, an elderly cousin, who acted as head of the establishment, and myself."

"I see—"

"I regret to say that Miss Jenks has passed on—"

"Yes—so you want," began Miss Earl, but the gentleman was not to be interrupted.

"If you will allow me to give you quite a detailed account at this meeting, I think it will save us both time in the end," he remarked.

"I beg your pardon," said Miss Earl.

"Miss Jenks had been of great service to us, had devoted her best efforts to us, and I wish to do her complete justice. But she was a woman of more than middle age, and naturally her view of life seemed somewhat archaic to my nephew, who is seventeen. He urges me to find some one who is up to date, and not too old, to take the place of Miss Arethusa."

"Very natural, I'm sure," murmured Ruth Earl, visioning "Miss Arethusa."

"Natural, possibly, but full of dangers. I feel that it is a very important step, this choosing of a woman who will be able to influence my nephew. She must be very intelligent, as well as tactful."

"Is she the housekeeper?"

"Oh no—there is a housekeeper under her."

"Just what are her duties?"

"Her duties are to be agreeable and create a home atmosphere."

Miss Earl choked back a laugh and gravely wrote it out on a card.

"She is hostess of my house, in other words. Now that my nephew is growing up, I think we should entertain rather frequently."

"You want a young woman, as I understand it. Must she be a widow—or—well—a matron?" inquired Miss Earl.

"I think it would be safer."

"May I ask what are the dangers? You have used the word 'safe' twice."

"Well, my nephew is at the impressionable stage. I should not want him to fall in love with this woman—"

"You want her plain, then?" queried Miss Earl, unsmiling.

"No—I should say not—not too plain. That was one of his complaints about poor Miss Arethusa. He said that you could not respect the opinions of anybody with apple-teeth like Miss Arethusa's!"

It was too much for Miss Earl, she laughed aloud and Mr. Farwell looked surprised, then joined her.

"I suppose this is rather an unusual demand—"

"We're used to unusual demands, but this is a little—special. The requirements are rather more social than practical."

"That's it exactly. You can see yourself that it is important that we find the right woman, on my nephew's account. Not flirtatious, nor flighty—no fortune hunters."

"We never register them," said Miss Earl gravely.

"Dick would like her to have an interest in sports."

Miss Earl nodded. "I'd like her to be an agreeable companion to me, when Dick is away, or at school. I'm at home a great deal—and I do not find many friends in Farwell—which is an industrial town."

"And your requirements in an agreeable companion are—?"

Mr. Farwell glanced at her, but nothing could be more business-like than her expression.

"Education first—I prefer a college woman, with nice tastes running toward books, and the fine arts. Pleasant voice and agreeable manners. Mentally, I should prefer her reactionary; I find radical women very upsetting—"

Miss Earl laid down her pencil and lifted a quizzical smile to the serious gentleman.

"Mr. Farwell, we cannot find this woman for you!"

"Why not?"

"She doesn't exist—"

"Oh—but I'm not unreasonable—"

"Let me read you my notes: '*Personality requirement*—must be agreeable—well mannered—pleasant voice—normal teeth. Neither plain nor too good looking—a widow, preferred. Not flirtatious, but interesting to a boy of seventeen. *Practical requirements*—Knowledge of how to run house, direct servants—create home atmosphere; interested in sports. *Mental requirements*—College education—taste for books—fine arts—conservative opinions.'"

She looked at him hopefully but he only said, "Is it too much to ask? I'll pay anything necessary."

"My opinion is that conservative ladies with a taste for fine arts do not go in for sports."

"I don't know much about women. I suppose that is so. Well—the boy is the important thing. Suppose

we leave me out of it entirely. Let's find a nice, cheerful motherly woman, whom he will like—"

"With a taste for sports," added Miss Earl.

"Leave out the sports—he can't have everything. Would that make it easier?"

"Not much. My advice would be, Mr. Farwell, to find this woman among your own acquaintances. You see, we register women equipped to do certain definite things—now your demand is so indefinite—"

"I want a woman to make two men comfortable and happy—is that indefinite?"

"No—but women who like that kind of employment usually find it in marriage—they do not come to us."

"I see. But if I took one without a college degree, and with no special training—?"

"But it takes special training to run your house, Mr. Farwell. I can supply you with any number of trained house managers, but I cannot guarantee the social requirements—"

"Wouldn't some of these—house managers have social grace, just by accident?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Then you cannot help me?"

"I'm so sorry. If any one comes in, who remotely suggests the qualities you want, I'll gladly put you in touch with her, but it's only fair to warn you that it is very improbable that any such person will come in. At least, you'll only get some of the things you want."

"I would try to be reasonable, Miss Earl, I assure you. I should be greatly indebted to you, if you would keep my needs in mind."

"I'll do my best. You want this—this woman right away?"

"Yes—we are in great need of her at once."

"All right. I'll let you know. Good morning."

"Thank you very much. Good morning."

He left her and Miss Earl sat for several seconds staring at the card in her hand, before she laughed and wrote "Paragon wanted" across its top. She went to the filing cabinet and began to run over the registration cards, glancing only at the confidential line added by the person who had interviewed the candidate. They ran, "Very plain—no personality." "Pretty;—silly manner." "Well informed—serious manner and awful voice. . . ." So on, indefinitely, Miss Earl chuckled as she read. She wished the handsome gentleman with the grand manner could have glanced at these confidential reports. It might have helped him to understand that charm and personality are not the qualities offered for sale, by women in professions, in these practical days of 1917.

Miss Earl's well ordered thoughts suddenly began to dance away impishly, out of the regular channels prescribed by the duties of the Bureau. These thoughts, from nine to six were of the most docile and business-like character, having to do with efficiency, capability, adaptability, and such tiresome essentials. They were used to bromidic conversations after this fashion:

"Miss Earl, I am in need of a secretary, with a college education and some experience, for about sixteen dollars a week."

"I understand, Mr. Smith. I think I have just the woman you want," etc., etc.

Something about the distinguished Mr. Farwell and his ridiculous demand set her thoughts rollicking off, as if a busy Friday morning were a holiday. Why was

it an unheard of demand to make of a professional woman that she be charming?

What was the matter with our education, with our professional training, that it laid no emphasis upon the social graces, nay, that such training always discouraged and under valued them. There was a tacit understanding that sex charm on the part of a self-supporting woman was unnecessary and out of place. It might mislead an employer! Inconspicuous personalities to correspond with inconspicuous business clothes, these were prescribed for all working women.

Miss Earl wished that every applicant of the Bureau had to take a special course in charm! But no, she would have to find the teachers, and where?

In her college days the girls were not all just alike. They seemed very individual as she remembered them. Was it just that they were young? Why was it that when women presented themselves, in this office, take them by and large, they were all alike? Cut out of the same cloth, sewed up in the same seams. They were all so eminently respectable and nice. There were days when she did wish somebody would come in in a bright red hat or a royal purple coat! Of course, there were silly ones but they weren't delightfully silly, they were only silly silly.

Now what sort of a woman would it have to be to please these two men? She wished she could qualify herself! She would leave the old Bureau without a thought, to "create a home atmosphere" at Farwell Hall, as the gentleman's country place was called, she noted from his card.

She began to imagine the right woman. She made her tall, gracious and beautiful. About thirty-three, a sweeping creature, who would awe the boy a trifle, yet



fascinate him. She must be unusual in mind, and of distinguished tastes to qualify as companion for the exacting Mr. Farwell. No such person had ever visited the Bureau, but Miss Earle saw her, with her mind's eye, very clearly.

Miss Earl thought over the army of rather drab candidates which filed in and out of the offices every day. It would be enlightening to this naïf gentleman, if she sent some of them down to Farwell to interview him. She put his card in with the F's, in the employers' drawer, and went back to her desk, ringing for her secretary. The interview had amused her greatly, but unless a miracle happened, she could not serve Mr. Gregory Farwell any further. Of course, she was not prepared to doubt the possibility of the miracle, because they happened almost daily in that office.

"Miss Burke, do you know any applicant who could be agreeable and create a home atmosphere?"

"Why no, Miss Earl," replied the girl, as startled as if Miss Earl had demanded a blossoming rod.

"Strange, the requests people do make of us!" commented Miss Earl, smiling. "Take this letter, please."

### CHAPTER III

**T**HE Campus of the University was spread with a new green carpet, and dotted with bright-coloured human flora. The white flannels of the men and the multi-coloured gowns and parasols of the girls gave it a lovely festive air. They strolled in pairs—they sat in groups. Laughter was everywhere and happy faces. The spirit of it was infectious. Joan came across from the Hall where she lived, crossing toward Haskell. She felt like dancing. She was going toward the high moment of her four years' work. She had been chosen Ivy Orator of her class, and she was on her way to the exercises.

She wore a new white dress for the occasion, her cheeks were flushed, and by the glances that followed her, the cordial nods that greeted her, she knew she looked her pretty best.

Edward Crane caught up with her. He, too, wore new clothes to celebrate the occasion and his cap and gown became him.

"Hello!" said Joan gaily.

"You're the prettiest girl on the campus," he said enthusiastically.

"This frock meant many 'doing withouts,' but it's worth it," she boasted.

"I haven't had a chance to congratulate you on what happened last night," he continued.

"Oh, Edward—wasn't it wonderful?" she cried, lifting her glowing face. "I never was so surprised in my

life as I was when they chose me to go to that convention."

"I don't see why you should be surprised—"

"But think of the people who are dying to go to New York—"

"Weren't you?"

"Yes, of course, but I am not specially fitted to be sent—do you think I am?"

"I think you've worked hard in this Y. W. C. A. work here—I know you're the best speaker they've got—why shouldn't you go?"

"Well—I *am* going—thanks be! Expenses paid, and a chance to see the world! Oh, Edward—life is very good!"

"My dear—my dear!" he said tenderly, and she looked away quickly to avoid his eyes. "See them floating across to this quadrangle. Aren't they pretty?" she exclaimed, pointing to the strolling groups approaching them.

"Yes—and they are all coming to listen to you, Joan. Do you know how proud I am?"

"Thank you," she said gratefully. It was big of him to take such pleasure in her triumphs for no honours had come to him, although he was being graduated.

"Good luck, dearest," he whispered, as the Master of Ceremonies came forward to meet Joan.

"Who is that peach?" a tall young man said to the girl with him, as Joan took her place.

"Her name is Joan Babcock. She's been around for four years, but nobody knows her. Fearful grind, they say. Phi Beta Kappa and all that. She is pretty, isn't she?"

Edward Crane could scarcely control his impulse

to arraign them. Careless poetasters in the world of learning, yet they dared classify his Joan, with her courage and her dreams! He turned away and changed his seat. The whole quadrangle was filled now with colour, talk and laughter. The sun slanted across the beautiful grey buildings that flanked the square—the sky above was blue and cloudless—the June air soft and warm. Youth and spring and beauty, and above it all, Joan, in her white dress. It was a picture that etched full on Edward Crane's memory.

Joan as she looked across the crowd felt the quick tears come to her eyes at the thought of what it would have meant to her father to see her here and now. Then her young joy in the colour and excitement of it, took possession of her. The world was a wonderful place, even as she had said to Crane—Dear old Edward!—She had to decide about him so soon now. . . . How many girls out there were facing the same decisions? Nearly every student carries a Major in Love in the Spring Quarter. How jolly they were! How beautiful! What were they going to bring to this old world, into which they were graduating? A vision of all the campuses, of all the colleges and universities of the country filled with just such eager, happy throngs as this, came into Joan's mind. An army of recruits, equipped for service. What enemies would they conquer, what new flags would they raise? How far would they push and prod the world forward? It was with a prayer on her lips for the true service of great causes, that Joan faced her classmates, when her name was called.

There is no need to weary you with her oration. It was young and ardent and idealistic. Just such words were being said, no doubt, on all the campuses of her

vision. Perhaps because she had already come to grips with life, as few of her hearers had, Joan spoke with authority about the seriousness of what she called "The Crusades" they were to enter. She begged them not to let their four years of preparation go for naught. Out of thousands who longed for the opportunity, they had been privileged to realize what education meant. Their very advantage laid upon them the duty of service to their fellows. However jejune the address may have been, it roused her listeners. The passion with which the girl spoke held their attention completely. There was a shiver of terror, then a thrill of power, in response to the big duties to which she called them. When, in the name of her class, she bent to plant the ivy, that class burst into a shout of applause and appreciation. It felt that it had outdone itself, in Joan's expression of its high ideals. She turned a misty smile upon them, in answer to their applause. It was a great and solemn moment to her.

After the exercises she was surrounded by enthusiastic listeners. Members of her class who had never known of her existence before, crowded up to offer homage. It was buzzed about that she was being sent to New York as the representative of the students to the National Convention of the Y. W. C. A. Congratulations poured in, with good wishes and compliments. Joan had never felt so young and happy in her life.

Edward watched her from afar, with an ache in his heart. Were success and honours carrying her away from him? She met all these aliens with poise and ease. He knew that they would embarrass him. Had he the right to carry her off to begin with him, in some obscure village—even if she would come?

The crowd drifted on, leaving the college hero, the Captain of the Football Team and the social leader of the college world with Joan. She beckoned to Crane and he reluctantly joined them. She introduced the three men, and they drifted to a near-by bench and all sat down, the Social Leader, Philip Morton, extended on the grass at Joan's feet.

"By Jove, how have you escaped me?" he remarked with a glowing look.

"By never being near where you are!" she laughed.

"But where have you kept yourself?"

"Hidden in classrooms and libraries," she replied.

"No wonder you never saw me."

"Oh, come now, I go to class every once in a while—" he defended.

"But you take all the snaps, so of course, we don't meet!"

"Ouch!" said Philip, the adored, joining in the laugh of the other two men.

"I've been a fan of yours for a long time, but I didn't know you could talk like that," said Captain Buck Porter.

"One could scarcely be in the University and not know you!" Joan answered, smiling up at him.

Edward felt the first tinge of jealousy he had known. He rose and excused himself.

"Shall I see you tonight?" he inquired.

"I'll be at home," she began.

"At home—tonight? Indeed you'll not! Why, this is the night of the Senior Ball!" cried Philip.

"But I'm not going."

"Not going—you! Is she going to that ball, Buck?"

"She is," replied the giant.

"But I haven't any partner, nor any clothes—"

"Wear what you've got on—we'll fix the partners—eh, Buck?"

"Us will!"

"Oh—but I can't—"

"Oh—but you can—you must!" cried Philip.

"I'll excuse you," said Edward, coldly.

"Oh, no—I—"

"The matter is settled—the discussion closed," remarked the social arbiter.

"Good-bye," said Crane, and left them.

"Oh, Edward!" she said, impulsively, sensing his hurt.

"Who is old Sour Ball?" asked Buck.

"He's a great friend of mine," she defended.

"Beg pardon—withdraw the remark," jibed Buck.

"Buck, you may have from now till six P. M. to fill half of Miss Babcock's program. I'll take it after that. Neither of us to take more than three dances for ourselves. Is that all right, Miss Babcock?"

"I suppose so. I'm just like Cinderella, going to my first ball. Do you really think I ought to go?"

He sat up and marked time for a bar of introduction, then he and Buck sang out, in unison, "We do! We do! We do!"

Joan laughed.

"I'd love it," she cried.

"The pumpkin coach will arrive at nine P. M. with me and my girl—also a bloke named Donald Trask—he's the lucky dog who draws you. He's home from Yale on a forced vacation," he added. "Be off, my son," to Buck.

The big man took his departure.

So it was that Joan went to the ball. Once launched on the primrose path she found nothing but kindness.

The romantic Miss Kent, who dwelt in the hall where she lived, came to her room, after dinner, with the offer of a ball gown "and trimmings," as she said. It was so sweetly offered that Joan accepted without a qualm.

"Come to my room and try on—We're going together, you know—I'm Phil's girl."

It was exciting to try on pretty clothes and be told how lovely you were! It was more exciting to descend to the hall, where the two resplendent ones awaited them. Was there ever such fun as Mr. Donald Trask's chaffing and ardent flirtation? A full program—good music, fine floor, admiration to her heart's content. Is it any wonder that Joan floated about as happy as a cloud.

"I've just come to a decision," remarked Mr. Trask, at the close of a dance.

"Yes?"

"I've decided to marry you!"

"Am I to be consulted?"

"You are not."

"Well—that relieves *me* of any responsibility," she laughed.

So they played and joked and danced the night through. Joan felt that she was just like the rest of them—she could give them as good as they gave—she could play their game. She went home in the grey morning, tired and happy.

The next scene that was enacted was the graduation. The big hall packed with people, the front rooms filled with the candidates for degrees, in caps and gowns. It was all ceremonious and rather solemn. The address made Joan choke—it called her back so surely from the dreams of the night before. She must not go



astray. She was a worker—not a butterfly. But oh, —the sweetness of that memory!

She caught Edward's absorbed face across the crowd. Tomorrow she was to start on her new adventuring to New York. Today she must settle with Edward. Her turn came and she marched up and received her sheepskin. Then they were all filing out into the sunshine again. She had a few gay words with some new friends, but she waited for Edward. He came slowly, and when he realized that she was waiting, the look in his face hurt her.

"Let's get rid of our caps and gowns and go over by the lake," she said.

"All right. I'll come by for you in ten minutes," he answered.

The walk to the park was rather silent—only casual remarks came to their lips. But once out on a deserted pier, with only the great shining lake as companion, Edward looked up at Joan, who sat above him gazing out over the water, and for a second he laid his forehead against her knee.

"Dear," he said, "I think I understand. I love you with all my heart, as you must know—but I'm not so blind that I cannot see that you do not care that much for me. Our companionship has meant everything to me. I shall always be your debtor—"

"Edward—don't. It has been that way with me, too," she interrupted him.

"Not quite. I want you to start out with the whole world to choose from—I want you to be free. I'm not big enough for you—"

"Please—" she begged—her hand on his hair.

"Don't let us make this last hour a sad one. I want it to remember always. It's settled now. If ever you

should want me—I'll be there. . . . Now let's look at the sunset and be happy."

So they sat until its glory faded in the twilight sky. In her heart Joan knew that he had spared her—that he had risen to his biggest self, to make her going on, happy. She was tenderly grateful to him. She tried to tell him how much he had taught her—how much his love had brought into her life. So they said good-bye—there on the shore of the lake.

The next day a second chapter in Joan's life was closed and she turned her face to the great shining East, to the City of Adventure.

## CHAPTER IV

MISS EARL looked up from the letter she was reading and laughed.

"That poor Mr. Farwell," she said to her assistant, "he is reduced to such a state of humility. In every letter he shears off a few more requirements."

"I should like to know what was the matter with that Mrs. Blake we sent out there. A very competent woman, to my mind."

"Competent was not one of his demands," smiled Miss Earl. "He says his nephew threatened to leave home, if she came."

"A wife is what that man needs!"

"Then he would have to put up with her, teeth and all!" nodded Miss Earl.

The assistant glanced at her quickly. Her chief did say puzzling things. What had teeth to do with the case?

"We'll never fill it," she said conclusively.

The telephone buzzed and Miss Joan Babcock was announced.

"According to the haphazard ways of the gods, this ought to be the girl," she remarked, as the assistant rose to go.

The door opened and Joan came in, hesitating a second at the threshold to measure the situation and the woman she was to meet.

They took swift inventory of each other. Miss Earl saw what she later described as "a thrilling per-

son." New York had done something for Joan. Whiting would never have known her. This adventuring in the metropolis had keyed her up to a high pitch. The dazzle had gone to her head. She had walked on air every minute since her arrival. Her whole personality responded—she exuded vitality and enthusiasm.

"Good morning, Miss Babcock—"

"How do you do?" said the girl, advancing with her hand out, in frank interest.

Miss Earl took it and felt a shock. She indicated a chair and Joan sat down.

"What a pleasant, sunny place!" she remarked, looking about her, and at the flowers on Miss Earl's desk.

"Yes—I like this room—"

"I like everything in New York!" exclaimed the girl. "It's a thrilling place. I want to live here—work here, right in the midst of things. Doesn't New York excite you, Miss Earl?"

"It is stimulating," the head of the bureau admitted.

"I want to get a job and stay forever!"

"What kind of a job?" smiled Miss Earl.

"I'll take what I can get, to begin with. I want to make a living while I look around and get my bearings. I feel a little—well—drunk is the word, I think. Do you understand?" she asked seriously and Miss Earl nodded just as if it was an every-day occurrence for applicants to announce that they were drunk with living.

"Tell me about your training, and what you want to do."

Miss Earl was enjoying herself and Joan felt her understanding. She told her the whole story, Whiting, the University and all, briefly, but vividly.

"I want to do something for the people who work with their hands—the ones who haven't had a chance for education. I want to teach the women of the poor how to keep their houses, food values—system in spending the family income—I don't know just what I can do yet, but that's what I'm trained for. I want them to use my education. Is that all pretty vague?"

"No—I get your idea, but it may be a trifle difficult to find just what you want. You specialized in social science, and took some courses in domestic science. Have you any money to fall back on for the present?"

"Not a sou! I've got to get something right away—because expenses stop with this convention and the money for my ticket back to Chicago has to be returned to the University Chapter. So—I'm awfully on your hands."

Miss Earl considered for a moment.

"There is an opening in one of the Women's colleges for a woman to run and manage the commons where the students eat. Would that interest you?"

"As I tell you, I'm prepared to be humble, but I am so tired of the college atmosphere. I have had four years of nothing else, and I would like to put my nose into something new."

Miss Earl went to the filing cabinet and came back with a drawer of cards, which she began to run over carefully and deftly.

"House mother in an orphanage? No, I'm afraid you are too young for that."

"I think I could be quite a popular mother," Joan said earnestly, at which Miss Earl smiled. The head of the Bureau was thinking to herself, "I wish I could engage her to sit in this office by the week! She makes me feel so young and confident!"

The cards piled higher and higher, face down and even.

"Can't I be any of those things?"

"Don't be discouraged, there are several other drawers," replied Miss Earl.

"I suppose I ought to go right straight to some factory town and study my own job, but I just would like to have a little fling. Does that sound silly to you?"

Miss Earl shook her head, her grave eyes lifted to the girl's shining face.

"You see I've always worked so hard. First I had to give every minute, every thought to getting in the University. I worked in that store all day and studied until midnight or later. Then I had not been as well prepared as the others, so I had to bone extra hard to keep up with my classes. Beside that, I was earning every cent I had—

"How did you earn money?"

"I waited on table, and washed dishes in a cheap student boarding house for my food. I slept in a kind of a closet for which I paid a dollar a month. Then I helped the janitress clean the gym, and I sang in the choir. My second year I did clerical work in the Dean's office. Oh, I managed, but it wasn't much fun."

Miss Earl nodded thoughtfully.

"You see, that's why it is so wonderful here. Everybody is so leisurely and comfortable and happy. You feel as if you could do anything—be president of a bank, or something! That's a fine way for an assistant janitress to feel!" she ended with a laugh.

"Pity there isn't a single demand for a bank president," smiled Miss Earl.

"You must think I'm a crazy sort of creature, taking

up your time with all this nonsense about myself. Do many women come in and talk such foolishness?"

"I get a good deal of foolishness, but painfully little nonsense," replied Miss Earl with a nice sense of distinction.

Joan's appreciation flashed back in a quick—"Oh, you are nice!"

Miss Earl's fingers paused on a card. A queer expression crossed her face. She looked at the girl before her in a puzzled way. Young, vibrant, modern. Beside her stood Miss Earl's vision, tall, mature, elegant. Nothing could be farther apart than these two women, and yet, how interesting it would be to play *deus ex machina* to two such individuals as Gregory Farwell and Joan Babcock.

"You are wondering if I would do for a certain sort of position, and you are about to decide that I would not," Joan remarked.

"You did not tell me that mind reading was one of your accomplishments."

"I think I am adaptable. I could turn my hand to anything, if it interested me. Did I tell you that?"

"I have on file a most unusual demand. It is not related to any of these positions we have spoken about, and I think you have no real preparation for the technical part of it. Besides, it would take you out of New York city, into a small industrial town nearby— No, I think you would better not consider it."

"Industrial town? Tell me about it. I'm game for anything."

Miss Earl produced the card of Mr. Farwell's requirements and read them over slowly and precisely. Joan's laughter flooded the room like sunlight—it rose and fell in infectious floods and Miss Earl joined in.

"Isn't it funny? It's so—so *man!*" Joan said finally.

"He thought he was being so reasonable," Miss Earl assured her. "He has written again and again. As *you* say—he's awfully on my hands."

"But I would adore to try it! It sounds like a plot for a comedy. But I'd never do—I couldn't run a house to suit that man. I'd probably organize the servants into a union—I haven't a leaning towards literature and the fine arts—the only thing I could do would be to plot with the boy."

"Of course you aren't a widow and you're not as plain as I'd like you to be—" began Miss Earl. "But you have had a course in domestic science." Joan was off again with her upsetting mirth. "Will you see him and talk to him?"

"Gladly—only won't it be a waste of your time?"

"Not if you have the meeting here in my office," responded Miss Earl, her eyes dancing.

"Done!" cried Joan. "When shall it be?"

"I'll wire him to come at eleven tomorrow. Shall I?"

"I'll be here. I'm to tell him the truth about my shortcomings?"

"Don't boast about them. If he asks you—tell the truth," counselled the descendant of a long line of Puritans.

Joan laughed, shook hands and swung out the door, whereupon Miss Earl sighed deeply, as if suddenly let down. She dictated a telegram to Mr. Farwell and tried to take her mind off of this most interesting case.

Promptly at eleven, the next day, Mr. Farwell was



announced. He was followed by a very handsome blond boy.

"My nephew, Dick—Dick Norton, Miss Earl. He insisted upon coming with me—"

Dick blushed and bowed.

"I have to live with her, too, you know. I got awfully fed up on Miss Arethusa," he remarked.

"Will you sit down," began Ruth. "I do hope I haven't brought you in on a false alarm, but your last letter was so urgent—"

"Our need is great, Miss Earl. The house is demoralized—needs a mistress."

"This young woman I have asked you to meet has only a few of the qualities that you indicated in our first interview—"

"I've come to see, by the ones you have sent us, that I cannot hope for those—those—"

"Is she old?" asked the boy.

"No—that's one trouble—"

"Is she plain?" he went on.

"Not as plain as she might be—"

"That's all right. The others you sent us were blighters," he remarked.

Miss Earl restrained a smile and addressed herself to Mr. Farwell.

"Miss Babcock is a college graduate of keen intelligence. She is not experienced in managing a house but has had some training in domestic science and I have a feeling that she can do anything she sets her mind upon doing. You spoke of creating an atmosphere—She can certainly do that—"

The telephone buzzed and she asked the office to send Miss Babcock in. The two men watched the

door with interest as intent as if it were a matter of life and death as to what type of female entered there.

Joan stood a second, sweeping them with a grave glance—then she advanced as they both rose.

"Good morning, Miss Babcock. May I present Mr. Farwell to you and his nephew, Mr. Richard Norton?"

The two men bowed and they all seated themselves in solemn silence.

"I have been explaining to Mr. Farwell that while you have not all the qualifications he hoped to find, that I thought you might answer his needs," began Miss Earl professionally.

Mr. Farwell was at a loss. He was unprepared for Joan—she took his breath a little.

"Do you go in for sports?" asked Dick, breaking the ice for all of them.

"Rather," laughed Joan.

"Would you—could you—Miss Earl has explained to you that we live in the country, as you might say?" Mr. Farwell stammered.

"Yes. She let me see the card with your requirements on it. It might expedite matters if I said that I don't answer any of them. But I'm of average intelligence, so I might learn to keep the housekeeper in order."

Dick burst into a guffaw.

"In order? You ought to see her—old Craddock's first name is order!"

"Quiet, Dick—don't interrupt Miss Babcock—"

"There's no use my bluffing about it. I want a job most awfully. I've got a good disposition, and some sense. If sprightly conversation at the table is necessary, I could qualify there. But unless you happen to like me, I couldn't be a bit of use to you."

"Take her, Uncle Greg—I vote for her."

"I hadn't expected quite so—young a woman—" began Mr. Farwell. "It isn't very gay in Farwell, I'm afraid."

"Oh—I amuse myself," said Joan.

"We might perhaps try the experiment for a month—the arrangement to be terminated on the close of that period, by mutual consent?"

"All right."

"The salary would be—?"

"One hundred dollars a month," said Miss Earl quietly.

"Perfectly satisfactory. Could you come at once, Miss Babcock?"

"Yes."

"Come on the 2.10 with us, will you?" asked Dick.

"Ye-es, I can even do that," agreed Joan.

"Excellent. If you will meet us, then, at the station at 2 o'clock, we will all go out together" said Mr. Farwell, rising. "We are greatly indebted to you, Miss Earl," he added.

"Not at all—I hope the arrangement will work out nicely."

"Oh—one thing!" exclaimed Joan—"I forgot to say about my opinions—they're not a bit reactionary."

"H-m!" said Mr. Farwell.

"Hang her opinions! Uncle Greg, why can't we take her to lunch?" demanded Dick.

They all laughed—even Mr. Farwell. The two men withdrew and Joan faced Ruth Earl with laughing eyes.

"Bless you forever! I'm off on this wonderful adventure. Wasn't it a ripping prologue?" she cried and hurried off to pack.

## CHAPTER V

**T**HE first incident in Joan's new situation was that she missed the train. The street car was held up by a blockade and although she got off and ran the rest of the way, the clock pointed relentlessly to 2.23 as she dashed into the station. The information clerk told her the next train left at 4.30. She went over to the telegraph station and sent a wire to Mr. Farwell, telling him the time of her arrival, then she telephoned Miss Earl.

"What will you think of me? I've missed the train!"

"That's too bad! When is the next one?" came the calm voice.

Joan explained the situation and reported on what she had done to remedy things.

"That's all right. Take the 4.30 and let me hear how things go."

"Rather. I'm glad you aren't too disgusted with me."

She heard Miss Earl chuckle.

"Good luck," was all the head of the Bureau said as she hung up the receiver.

In the meantime, Mr. Farwell had dragged the reluctant Dick on to the 2.10 train. The youngster was determined to wait for the 4.30.

"She's probably missed the train—" began his uncle.

"She's probably changed her mind!" interrupted the

boy. "Why would a peach like that want to live with an old codger like you and a young cub like me? I knew she was too good to happen!"

"Dick, you must not let your enthusiasm run away with you. Miss Babcock is no doubt a very nice young woman, but she comes into our house in a business capacity—as you might say."

"I don't care what capacity she comes in, if she'll only come."

"I think you should not refer to her as a 'peach.'"

Dick laughed and the subject was closed. When they arrived at the house, Mr. Farwell ordered the car to meet the 4.30 train. But when Joan descended at the station, it never occurred to her to see if any one were there to meet her. She hurried off to find a man to take charge of her little old steamer trunk. The village expressman agreed to deliver it at once and he obligingly gave Joan the directions she asked for.

"Jump up on the seat with me, if ye want to ride up," said the man. "It's a fair long walk."

"All right, thanks," Joan replied and "jumped up."

It took some little time for the leisurely villager to get the trunk onto the wagon and himself onto the seat beside Joan, but it was eventually accomplished. The old horse clattered off and they bumped through an ugly industrial town of the well established American pattern. The buildings all had a cheap, temporary look. The streets were badly kept. Out at the edge of the town proper, the factories clustered, and about them the cottages of the workers. They were old and in poor condition, Joan noted. There were no signs of an intelligent overseer, or of modern methods.

"Who owns these factories?" she inquired.

"I dunno's I can jest say. Mr. Farwell is the head

of 'em, they say, but they go to Mister Dick when he's of age."

"Mr. Farwell? The Mr. Farwell where I'm going?" demanded Joan.

"Yep. He inherited 'em from his folks. Ye see, the town was named fer 'em."

"But does he let the town look like this—all run down and shabby?"

The man stared.

"I guess he ain't much interested in how the town looks. He don't live in it. He hardly ever goes through it, jest dashes to the station in his autymobeel."

"But he ought to look at it!" exclaimed Joan.

"Mebbe so."

"Are the people in the works satisfied?"

"Not's I know."

"Why don't they demand something else?"

"Ain't ben no trouble fer a long time. Last time, the Company went to Noo York and come back with a hundred or so men, an' shut out the kickers, so they didn't do no good—jest lost their jobs."

Joan made no reply. They were outside of the town now, in fresh, green country, with its early summer freshness. The road was fine—the driver explained that the Farwells had the road built for their motor cars, and that they kept it in order, without expense to the county. Rolling hills and woods were on each side—a country of gentle, soothing quality. The ugly little town back there was like a sore on the earth's beautiful breast.

"This is the beginning of the Farwell place," the old man remarked. "Got about five hundred acres in all. Deers and wild things in some of it."

They began to wind through a park. Trees, hun-

dreds of years old; pools, lily lined, hedges and gardens passed by them, and then at last the house appeared, atop of a high knoll. It was Colonial and wide-winged. There were terraces before it, with great plateaux of gardens.

"So that's it," said Joan breathlessly. And then to the old man's astonishment, she began to laugh.

"What's the joke?"

But before she could answer, Dick on a horse, plunged out of a side path and at sight of her, lifted a shout—

"Miss Babcock! For Heaven's sake, didn't Jergens meet you?"

"Nobody met me—I didn't need to be met—I found a friend here who brought me out—"

"Hello, Jake" grinned Dick. "Running a passenger bus now, are you?"

The driver nodded and chuckled.

"I thought you'd given us the slip," cried the boy.

"No—I merely lost the train—" she smiled.

"We sent the motor after you—"

"I didn't even look for it. I never thought of it—I liked this better anyhow. Mr. Jake told me about the town and all—"

"Lots to tell about that old clutter of huts," laughed the boy.

But Joan couldn't bring herself to smile.

"Mebbe you could 'light here, Miss, because I ain't allowed to go up to the front door—"

"Yes, you are, this time, Jake. Come on."

The boy walked his horse beside them, bending to point out spots of interest to Joan. It was this queer cavalcade that greeted the eyes of Mr. Farwell, as he stepped out on the terrace—Joan up beside Jake, the

old horse coming slowly, snatching at grass or bushes in the hope of a bite, the boy bareheaded and handsome, riding beside her. As they came up to the porte cochère, he went to meet them.

"My dear Miss Babcock!" he protested, "what a way to welcome you to Farwell! Didn't Jergens find you?"

"It was my fault, Mr. Farwell—I didn't look for him. I didn't know whether you had reached here or not. It was so stupid of me to have missed the train."

He helped her to alight, nodding to Jake.

"I'm so much obliged to you," the girl said to the driver, offering him a bill.

"That's all right, we have a bill with Jake," the boy objected.

"I prefer to settle my own, thanks," replied Joan.

Jake touched his hat brim and rattled off.

"Mrs. Craddock will take you to your room, Miss Babcock. I am having tea out here on the terrace. Won't you join us, in fifteen minutes or so?"

"Thank you."

Mrs. Craddock appeared, a set, elderly woman. Joan felt her antagonism, as Mr. Farwell performed an introduction. She followed her into the great open hall, and up the wide stairway to a suite of rooms at the end of the second floor hall.

"These are the rooms Mr. Farwell ordered for you, Miss Babcock," said the housekeeper.

"Thank you. These will do very nicely," said Joan, judiciously, on an impulse.

"Miss Arethusa was on the *upper* floor," Mrs. Craddock remarked meaningly.

"Ah?" responded Joan. "I prefer this floor. Thank you, Mrs. Craddock."



Mrs. Craddock withdrew and Joan closed the door. Then she flew about upon a tour of inspection. The room she was in was evidently a sitting-room. A writing desk—well filled book-cases—an open fireplace—flowers everywhere. Beyond, a delightful bedroom, looking out over gardens and into trees. A heavy, delicious perfume that comes with early evening, floated up to her. Here were wicker and chintz and all the luxurious appurtenances so dear to every woman's heart. Out of this room opened her bathroom, perfect in its appointments.

Joan drew a deep breath of enjoyment, and went to the mirror and leaned toward herself.

"Joan Babcock!" she exclaimed, as if in surprised recognition. Then she laughed. She was excited. She had never even dreamed of such a fairyland as she found herself in.

She suddenly remembered the tea. She took off her coat and tossed her hat on the bed. It disclosed a cropped curly head, like a Greek boy's. She ran a comb through it—dashed some water on her face—brushed her skirt and hurried down to the terrace. She delivered a shock to the two men who waited for her there. Naturally they had not seen her without her hat. As this slim boyish figure came swiftly across the terrace toward them, they each smothered an exclamation—Mr. Farwell of consternation, Dick of delight.

"I hope I haven't kept you waiting," she began gaily—"What's the matter?"

"You—I beg your pardon—you look so different without your hat," apologized her host.

"Oh—it's my hair. You see, I wear it this way because it's so easy. I can duck it into a bowl of water every day and never think of it again."

"It's ripping!" burst out Dick, and Joan blushed.

"What air—what an evening—and what a castle of enchantment!" she breathed, as she took the chair Mr. Farwell held for her.

"You like it?" he said.

A servant placed a tray before her, loaded with mysterious paraphernalia, which she realized she was expected to manipulate. She had a moment of cold terror. They never would keep her on, if she couldn't even pour their tea properly.

"Shall I fill the teapot, Madam? The faucet of the samovar gets very hot," said the butler.

"Yes, please," assented Joan, with a sigh of relief.

After that she managed very well, with the butler remedying oversights. She took notes during the ordeal. When the butler left them, they chatted easily and without effort. Twilight is a relaxed hour of the day. Joan made them laugh over her efforts to catch the train. Dick went off and brought out some puppies to show her and all three of them were amused at their youthful antics.

When they rose to go into the house, Dick spoke impulsively.

"Oh, Miss Babcock, do like us well enough to stay for ever!"

"You may not like me well enough to want me to stay that long—" laughed Joan.

"Yes, we will, won't we, Uncle Greg?"

"We want her to stay as long as we can make her contented," responded the older man politely. Joan nodded at him, smiling. How entirely he was the last expression of the wealth and leisure that had created this estate. He had every patrician quality of body—he was handsome and suave and delightful. It seemed

for one sunset-flooded, misleading moment that it was worth the toiling and moiling of the mass in the village, to produce this beautiful aristocrat—this final flower of civilization, that grew out of the muck.

Her mind shot back to Whiting and her people. She must be true to her purpose. What place had she here, with the enemy? Must it be always the enemy? Was there no compromise? Did she come as spy, to learn their secrets, or did she come as missionary, to show them the light? She shook herself free of her thoughts.

"You are chilled—we kept you out there too long," said Mr. Farwell.

"I'm not cold. It was a ghost walking over my grave," she replied.

"We don't allow ghosts at Farwell Hall," he gravely assured her.

## CHAPTER VI

**J**OAN stirred, stretched herself, opened her eyes. A bird was singing joyously outside her open window. She sprang out of bed and sent the blind shooting up—a sunny, garden world lay beneath her and beyond, the hills.

“Um-um-um!” she breathed it in, exultingly. A glance at her watch showed her that she had much time before breakfast, which occurred at nine in this leisurely house. She put on a bathrobe and sat down by the window to think out the problems of the day.

She must take up the reins of government before the sun set—but how? Should she throw herself upon the human sympathies of the corps of servants and ask them to help her run the house, or should she adopt the haughty tone she had been moved to assume with Mrs. Craddock and never, on any account, admit less than an omniscient knowledge of how to conduct a mansion of this size. Her simple democratic soul yearned for the former plan—her intelligence backed up her intuitions, in telling her it would never work out. They might like her, but they would not respect her, because they would question her authority. No—she, the born rebel against the authority of mere position, was entering upon a career as autocrat. If only the intricate machinery of living did not overpower her. She found that she was instinctively impressed by the men servants who had served the dinner the night before. She must get over that. She must remember that they were

of much less importance than the men who served the furnaces in Whiting. These servants were a part of a parasitic system that must go—she had heard that preached all her life. The fact that the velvet-footed, perfect service of that meal was an event in her life, must not affect her judgment. Her mind went round and round.

"Now, look here," she said to herself finally, "you are here temporarily as a part of a system you condemn. You are here to serve that system, not to demolish it. Now, you must either put your radical principles to sleep for awhile and give yourself wholly to this experiment—or you must go back to New York today—"

"Of course it's only temporary—but why can't I make it count? If I'm to fight the Capitalist, why can't I study his habits of mind? I can't do anything with Mr. Farwell—but can't I make young Dick see his responsibilities? I mustn't be a sneak or a spy or a coward. If I'm challenged, I must confess. But in the meantime, am I ready to give my convictions a vacation?"

A pink rose fell into her lap. She started and looked out. Dick was in the garden, smiling up.

"I say—come on down—it's a great day," he called.

"All right—in a minute," she answered. She knew that she had made her decision. She was in for it, for a month anyhow. She knew she could make Mr. Farwell comfortable, if she set her mind to it. She turned on her bath and sang, because she was glad.

When she was dressed she mastered the set of telephone bells that connected with all departments of the house. She rang for the housekeeper. She had never rung a bell to summon another human being in her life and she marvelled that she was not ashamed to do it.

When Mrs. Craddock responded she told her that she wished to make a tour of inspection of the house immediately after breakfast. Then she ran downstairs and into the garden where Dick impatiently waited.

"Thought you never were coming!" he complained.

"Twenty minutes by the clock," she retorted. "Oh, thanks," as he offered a cluster of June roses, dew-washed. She stuck them into her belt.

"Did you sleep?"

"Like a top."

"It's bully to have you around."

"It's bully to be here."

"I've got a horse for you."

"But I don't ride."

"What? Why not?"

"Never had a chance to learn or money to buy things to ride on."

"My word—I thought everybody rode. Well—I'll teach you. We'll begin after breakfast."

"Sorry—I begin my job after breakfast."

"What job?"

"Running the house."

"Don't you bother—let old Craddock do it. I'll keep you busy."

"I'm not engaged to play with you."

"Yes, you are. Uncle Greg won't expect you to do much."

"Then I'll surprise him."

"Do you *like* to work?" incredulously.

"I do."

"You're a queer one!"

"Don't you like to work?"

"Nope—hate it."

"You're a poor one!" she retorted.

"Why?"

"Because loafers and shirkers are no good."

"Here—I don't like those words," he flared up.

"The things they mean are even less likeable," she answered easily. "Let's go see the puppies."

"Good idea," he acquiesced, and led the way.

Half an hour later they joined Mr. Farwell in the breakfast room. "How charming and young they are!" he thought as he greeted them. Joan looked the boy's age. It was a most disconcerting situation he had got himself into, importing this odd and undeniably attractive young woman into their midst. Of course she wouldn't do—but he hoped the month would pass without landing Dick head over heels in love with her.

When they were seated at breakfast, Dick brought up the matter of Joan's duties again.

"Look here, Uncle Greg, I want to teach Miss Babcock to ride, and I offered to begin after breakfast and she says she has to begin her job then. She ought to have a rest before she starts anything."

"I didn't come here for a rest. I'm a self-supporting woman with work to do," smiled Joan.

"There's no hurry about anything here, Miss Babcock," Mr. Farwell remarked. "If the boy wants—"

"Please—the boy must wait. I shall give my entire attention to my new duties today," she said decidedly.

"As you like," he said, but Dick gloomed.

At ten she braced herself and summoned Mrs. Craddock.

"Good morning again, Mrs. Craddock. I thought the best way for me to begin, was to ask you to take me over the entire house and let me get acquainted with the place and with the servants."

Mrs. Craddock nodded, and led the way.

"Have you been here long?" Joan proceeded, undaunted.

"Since Mr. Dick was a baby."

"Is that so? Have most of the people in the house been here that long?"

"No—only Annie, the cook. Servants ain't what they used to be. They've got a lot of notions in their heads, is what I say."

"Well, notions in the head help the world grow, Mrs. Craddock," was Joan's unfortunate answer, for Mrs. Craddock later repeated it to the cook, with the bitter comment, "I bet she's a Socialist, or one of them things—" But cook didn't agree, because Joan had made a fine impression on her.

"What a wonderful kitchen!" she had exclaimed on entrance to that domain. "No wonder you make such delicious things to eat, Annie."

"Glad you think so, Mum."

Annie initiated Joan into a world of wonders. A kitchen heretofore had meant a small dark place of pots and pans. This was a huge, sunny laboratory, equipped with elaborate apparatus, with several assistants to work at the experiments, as Joan phrased it to herself. She commented intelligently on all of it—and managed not to show surprise.

Dick sauntered into the kitchen, during her interview there.

"Hello—calling on Annie? Isn't her kitchen a wonder? You could eat off the floor any minute."

"Oh, now, Mister Dick," protested Annie, red with pleasure.

"Beats any kitchen in New York, I tell her."

"It certainly is a fine kitchen," Joan agreed.



"Sometime when we're alone, I'll tell you how it is with Annie's cooking. Uncle Greg and I have to go to New York every once in a while to get plain food."

"Oh, Mister Dick," Annie begged. "Ye know, Ma'am, Mrs. Craddock an' me has been here since Mister Dick come, as a little fella, so we don't pay no attention to his talk."

"Don't you, now?" he cried in mock fury. "Well, you and Craddock begin to pay attention to me, or I'll get Miss Babcock to fire you."

Joan smiled at his nonsense, which delighted the other two women.

"When are you going to be through here? I've got something to show you," he said to Joan.

"I'll be busy all morning, I'm afraid. But don't wait for me."

"Oh, I've got nothing to do. I'll stick round and see the show. I haven't been over the plant since I was a kiddy, tagging Craddock, and carrying her keys."

"Oh, do run along. You'll be horribly in our way. Won't he, Mrs. Craddock?"

"He won't be in *my* way. He can come, an' welcome, so far as I'm concerned," replied that person tartly, glad of a chance for opposition.

"You see, I have one friend," he boasted.

"Stay here an' talk to me, Mr. Dick. You ain't interested in Mrs. Craddock's linen closets, an' I got a chocolate cake in the oven, about due to come out."

"Ha, I take you, Annie. Ladies, these impassioned bids for my society are flattering to a timid youth, but Annie, with the chocolate cake wins, in a walk."

"Thank you, Annie," said Joan.

"I may join you later," he retorted.

"I only receive visitors after business hours," said Joan coolly.

"I wish you would train me in as a clerk," he remarked. "There's nothing to do round here."

"Cheer up, I'll get to you later. We'll find something to keep you out of mischief. Annie, I certainly have no criticisms or suggestions to make on your department," Joan said. She nodded to Craddock to lead the way, and the two inspectors went on.

The cook was flattered. She even refused to join in Mrs. Craddock's scornful—"Settin' up a child like that on me! Did you see her hair?"

"I thought her hair was real cute," defended the cook.

It took the entire morning to go over the departments—laundry, kitchen, storerooms, bedrooms, linen closets—and all. Joan was interested every minute, as well as impressed with the fact that it took an actual factory force to run this great establishment for the housing and feeding of two men. It was a revelation to her.

Everywhere she tried to show an intelligent interest in the work of various servants, and to say a word of appreciation.

In the afternoon she asked Mrs. Craddock to go over the expenditures in the various departments—showing her the account books for the last six months. She found them incomplete and inaccurate. Mrs. Craddock said Miss Arethusa had no head for figures.

"But doesn't Mr. Farwell ask to see the accounts?"

"No. He don't care. He's free-handed so long as he's pleased."

"But that is bad business. I'll have a talk with him about that," Joan remarked.

"Goin' to teach us old ones, who has been here fifteen year how to run a house!" scoffed Craddock to the cook later.

"Mebbe she can—I hear they're learnin' the young 'uns lots of things these days," replied that functionary.

At four thirty Joan went in search of Mr. Farwell and found him reading in the sun porch.

"Well, you have had a busy day!" he exclaimed, rising to meet her.

"And an interesting one," she added.

"How did you find my demesne?"

"Wonderfully well run—but extravagantly."

He smiled.

"I'm afraid that is true."

"If I were to stay here for any length of time, I'd introduce a regular office system, of accounts and checks."

"Would you?" he asked, interested.

"Why do you let them run it so slackly?" she inquired.

"It's easiest not to be too demanding of them."

She made no reply and he watched her expression.

"Does that seem too supine to you?"

"Yes—I can't understand lethargy or inertia.

"I suppose not," he commented, aware of her vitality at the moment.

"I shall make no radical changes until after my month of probation—but if I stay on, I warn you."

"I am warned. Do you think this experiment is going to interest you, Miss Babcock?" he inquired idly.

"Every experience in life interests me, Mr. Farwell," she answered briskly.

"You lucky girl!" he exclaimed with a sigh.

"Lucky? No—you can't take anything out, that

you don't put in—I put myself in every minute. You'd have some fun, too, if you tried it," said his strange new employé.

"I wonder?" remarked Mr. Farwell, aware that she might be planning to revolutionize him, too. He was not sure that he would not enjoy the experiment.

## CHAPTER VII

**G**REGORY FARWELL had lived on this good green earth for forty-five easeful years. He had come into his fortune at twenty-one, while he was still in college, so that the urge of necessity was a phrase not in his vocabulary. The death of the elder Farwell left his two children, Gregory and Elizabeth, Dick's mother, and Dick himself, the sole heirs of a vast estate.

Elizabeth, at twenty, married Richard Norton, a handsome ne'er-do-well, a college friend of Gregory's. She had supported him in luxury until his death, which happened on the hunting field while Dick was a baby. The young wife was never comforted for her loss. She grieved herself into melancholia, and when young Dick was eight years old, she took her life, leaving the boy to Gregory.

As he was in India at the time of this tragedy, he had the child taken to Farwell Hall to be looked after. It was nearly two years later that he put in an appearance there, and made the acquaintance of his nephew. He found him a handsome, sturdy lad of ten, fond of sports and out-of-door life. He was no student. He was both spoiled and wayward. In fact, Gregory found himself, for the first time in his life, encumbered with a responsibility. He was fond of the boy, just as he had been fond of his care-free father. He had no very definite ideals about his future, or the kind of training he needed, other than the inherent ideals of

his class—that he should play fair, hit straight in a fight, and have a regard for “the things that are done.”

The seven years that followed were the formative years of the boy's life, and to the Recording Angel it must have seemed that he was learning none of the lessons of self control, and application to a task, which would stand him in stead later. His education was a thing of shreds and patches. A few terms in a school, interrupted by a year of aimless travel, would be followed by six months with a tutor. Preparation for college was always being delayed for this reason and that. Dick was devoted to his uncle and perfectly satisfied with their way of life.

Gregory was scarcely the one to acquaint the boy with the thoughts and events of his own time, because Gregory disdained all contact with the times. He deemed them vulgar, commercial and ugly. Since Beauty was the god which he worshipped, just so was Ugliness the devil he fought away from. Not that he ever roused himself to do battle with him, but he escaped him at every point, when it was possible. If he was actually confronted by the fiend, he looked the other way.

He was aristocrat in every fibre. The People were as remote as dwellers in Mars. They were a part of the ugliness and stupidity of the world. Business he scorned. He left the administration of his estate and Dick's to men who understood the grimy game. Old Jake was quite right; he never saw the town of Farwell—he had not looked at it in years, not since, as a boy, he had noted its hideousness.

He surrounded himself with exquisite things and luxury. He journeyed to all the beauty spots of the world. He fed his spirit with music, with art, with

books, like a gourmet—like the Count O'Dowda, in *Fanny's First Play*, his creed was:

"Out of the soot and fog and mud and east wind; out of vulgarity and ugliness, hypocrisy and greed, superstition and stupidity—out of all this, and in the sunshine, in the enchanted region of which great artists alone had the secret, in the sacred footsteps of Byron, of Shelley, of the Brownings and of Ruskin."

He had been too detached from the life about him to make any human ties. He attracted women, partly because of this very aloofness, but no woman had deeply intrigued his interest. They were too much of the times for his taste. His gipsy life precluded intimate friends. So impregnable was the wall that this *precieux* had raised between himself and the time in which he lived, that no suspicion of its robust ideals ever crossed his mind.

The interruption in the smooth course of his days, caused by the death of Miss Arethusa, affected him as a real crisis. It fretted and irritated him intensely to have to make a change—to have to go out and search for a woman to take charge of them—and now to adjust himself to this woman was a serious obligation.

He felt that Fate had played a trick on him in sending him Joan. He could not make out how he had been cajoled into accepting her, even by Dick's insistence. He knew the minute that he looked at her that she was a person. He did not want a person—he wanted a shadow—a well-bred shadow, to flit about unnoticed. Nobody had ever deliberately looked at Miss Arethusa—not more than once. But this girl you *felt* every minute—whether she was in your sight or not—you felt things moving—changing.

She was a doer, this girl. As such, she menaced the

whole fabric of his life. He ought to send her off at once, while there was time. He had every excuse. She was too young, she was too vibrant—she was already a danger for Dick, who followed her about like an adoring puppy. Besides he, Gregory, had to think about her; she said things and looked things that he remembered—he didn't want to think about her—why should he?

In the midst of some such colloquy, she appeared.

"May I interrupt you a minute?"

"Certainly."

"Has it occurred to you that Dick would be in about the fifth grade, if he went to public school?"

"No—would he?"

"It's pitiful that any one should start out so handicapped, when he could have such an advantage. He will have such terrible responsibilities, and how is he prepared to meet them?"

"Terrible responsibilities?" he asked, with lifted eyebrows.

"Isn't he an heir—won't he be the head of those factories?"

"Does that seem to you a 'terrible responsibility'?"

"Wealth is the greatest responsibility a man can have in these days, isn't it? It means the welfare of so many dependants. It lies in the hands of great capitalists to hold back the world or to push it bounding forward."

"Does it? How?"

There was a hint of amused interest in his tone, that caught her up short.

"You're making fun of me, I'm afraid, Mr. Farwell. What I wanted to say was this—if you like, I will tutor Dick an hour or two a day. I have time,



and I'm so lately out of college that I can help him, I know."

"I think that is very delightful of you, Miss Babcock, and you might succeed in making Dick work. No one else has. But you must not let our obvious needs absorb you too much."

"I want to do it. I have not enough to keep me busy."

"*Must* you be busy?" he inquired.

"Certainly. Don't you think special advantages lay upon us especial responsibilities?"

"May I ask what especial advantages?"

"Education and—health."

"You think—you must—pay for these?"

"No—I must make use of them—I must share them. Don't you think that?" she challenged him.

"No—I refuse to accept responsibilities."

"But you can't choose—they descend upon you—just as your wealth did upon you—as it will upon Dick."

"Like Fates!"

"Yes—"

"But you wouldn't stand up against Fate?"

"Wouldn't I? I have."

"I'm sure Fate got the worst of it!" he laughed. "Go after Dick, by all means. I'm almost sorry for him—"

"Why?"

"Because I feel that willy nilly—you'll get something into his head."

"They may be things that you won't want to have there—"

"Of course, I can't act as censor to what gets into Dick's brain."

"I just wanted to be fair about it, and call your at-

tention to the fact that if I should make a man of Dick, I don't want you to blame me for it."

"Look here—what are you plotting for poor Dick?" he demanded.

"I'm plotting to wake him up—to get him interested in life—to make him see the world—to make him want to do his part."

"It sounds boring to me."

"Doesn't everything sound that way?"

His amused glance rested on her again.

"How you doers scorn us dreamers!"

"Not when you dream outside yourselves. My father was a dreamer—it was because he dreamed that I want to make his dreams come true."

"What did he dream?"

"Will you let me go ahead with Dick?"

"By all means—you have my blessing."

"Would you rather not finish this month of probation?" she asked unexpectedly.

"What makes you think that?"

"I know I'm not what you want. I knew it at first, of course, but now that I've been here for a week—I'm sure of it."

"I hope we haven't made you uncomfortable?"

"No—I've made you uncomfortable."

"On the contrary—"

"I know I'm upsetting," she interrupted. "It is just as if a real person walked into a dream world, where things were faint, and shadowy and fine. Where events moved slowly and nothing made much difference. A live, purposeful human, out of a living world, couldn't help but be irritating to the shades."

He laughed aloud, at this.

"Is that how we impress you?"

"Yes, and that's how I impress you. Please don't say you think I may be good for you."

"But I don't—I think you may be destructive to us," he said gravely.

"Then I must go, of course."

"And leave Dick to his ignorance?" he probed. "By the way, you don't call Dick shadowy?"

"Dick might follow me out into the world of men—"

"It's safer to keep you in, then."

"But if I bring the world in with me—?"

"You won't—you can't. I've guarded against that calamity for years."

"It is your risk then. I'll begin on Dick tomorrow," she said, and left him.

"Now, why didn't I send that disturbing young woman packing?" he inquired of himself.

He thought of the long line of tutors who had tried to induce Dick, by artful means, or to drive him by stern commands into the realm of learning. He recalled their various, indignant departures, and smiled. The young woman's confidence in her powers was certainly amusing. Dick appeared at the moment.

"Have you seen Miss Babcock?" he inquired.

"How did you happen to let her get out of your sight, Dick?"

The boy grinned.

"She's a peach!" he remarked enthusiastically.

"I thought we agreed that you were not to refer to the lady as a peach."

"You agreed to it, not me."

"Don't be fresh. I think I ought to warn you that Miss Babcock is not at all the woman we need here, to

my thinking, and at the end of the probationary month, she will be going on, so don't get too dependent on the lady."

"Not what we need? Good Lord, what do you want?" the boy burst out.

"I want an older woman, with more experience, and stability—" Mr. Farwell began.

"Experience and stability! You want some old party, that looks like Miss Arethusa, to fuss round you and hang on your words."

"Don't be ridiculous!"

"Just when I'm beginning to have a regular home, for the first time in my life, with a woman around who's got some sense, you go and send her away. I won't stand it! If she goes, I'll go too!" he cried, in high excitement.

"Where will you go, may I ask?"

"I'll go off and get a job. I'm not going to stay around this lonesome old tomb, if she goes."

The boy flung himself out of the room, almost weeping. Mr. Farwell stirred uneasily.

"I must send her away tomorrow!" he said firmly, to himself.

## CHAPTER VIII

GREGORY'S threat to send her away was not carried out.

Joan promptly "began on Dick," as she picturesquely phrased it. He was a reluctant victim at first, but when she assured him that she could not accept riding lessons from him except in return for some lessons from her, he agreed to the experiment "for a while." After the first few days there was no protest, for those hours from eleven to one, spent on the terrace, or in Joan's study, became a pleasure to both of them.

Dick had a quick mind, stored with all sorts of odd facts and bits of information, as the result of his wanderings over the globe. He was anxious to do well and show Joan that he was no fool, so he concentrated on the task in hand for the first time, and to his surprise he enjoyed it.

"Cæsar was some little general, wasn't he?" he remarked one day when they were busy with the Gallic Wars. "I never thought about his being a real fellow before—he was so wrapped up in Latin. But you make me get him in spite of those verbs."

"Nonsense—you get him yourself. Of course he's a real fellow. You can't afford to miss him, any more than you can Ulysses in *The Odyssey*."

"I wish I'd had you around all the time. I'd have been through college by now."

"Anybody who can work as you can—why it's a sin you haven't finished up your college prep. work! Where are you going to college?"

"Harvard—all of our men go there."

"Pity you can't go to a western university."

"Why?"

"It would be so good for you—open your eyes to things you ought to know. You may get an education, but you'll never learn anything about the country you live in and the people who make it what it is, by going to Harvard for four years."

"Why do I need to know about the country and its people?" he asked her.

"Because you are going to have great power some day over many people, through your money, and you owe it to them that you know something of them, of their thoughts and needs. You must know what the men of the country are thinking."

"Uncle Greg doesn't."

"We're talking about you," she evaded.

She led him into various studies, psychology, anthropology, the social sciences. She never announced that they were about to begin a new course, but she led his mind in the desired direction and aroused his interest, by reading and discussion. She thoroughly enjoyed testing her own powers and she flattered herself she was working out a simple educational system fitted to her pupil, in a way any pedagogue might envy. They worked together for two hours in the morning and Dick pegged away an hour or more by himself in the afternoon or evening. The fact of the matter was that the boy had been bored to death with his own aimlessness, and part of his enthusiasm came from the satisfaction of having a core to his day.

"I'm watching your miracle on Dick with interest and some awe, Miss Babcock. How do you do it—is it witchcraft?" inquired Gregory.

"Simplest thing in the world—I've got him interested in *what* he is learning, instead of putting the emphasis on the idea that he is *learning* something."

"I see—you catch him unawares, as it were, and teach him something. Very indirect and feminine," he remarked.

"Perhaps, although I don't admit that indirectness is feminine. I prepared myself for college without much direction, so I know all the short cuts and the natural ways to learn things."

"Very interesting—hope it lasts—"

"It will last," she said confidently. "His curiosity is awake now. He's got a good, quick mind. I wish I could send him to the University of Wisconsin—"

"Horrors—why?"

"It's so modern—and American. It would make a man of him."

"Can't they make a man of him at Harvard?"

"They might, but they won't. They'll make an aristocrat of him."

"If I were sensitive I should perhaps defend my kind. Why do you object to us so bitterly?"

"If you would *do* instead of just *be*, I think you could save the world."

"But why should we save the world?"

"Because you've had all the gifts, the advantages."

"I can't follow you in this Puritan idea of responsibility," he remarked. "It is foreign to my whole concept of endurable living."

"There is no way we can explain to each other, is there? Why do we discuss it?"

"I enjoy discussion, myself, and you are so fervent about your ideas."

She left him with the sense she so often had, that he was secretly amused at her. She realized that his mould was set and not to be changed, but Dick's mould was in the making and she had a chance to help shape it. She was getting interested in Dick.

The riding lessons became a part of the day's routine also. Dick was a very exacting teacher, but he admitted that she "caught on quickly." "The point is to stick on," she retorted. He was determined that she should ride in good form, so he drilled her like a riding master.

"Dick, you don't encourage me enough. I am lots more lenient with you," she protested.

"If I do, you get cocky. Got to keep a tight rein on you—"

"I'm going to try it on you," she threatened.

"Don't need to—I stand without hitching."

Their rides took them all over the great, beautiful estate. They could ride for hours in it, never going out of Farwell grounds. Some of it was very wild, some of it kept like a park.

"Dick, doesn't it make you wonder why you are to be the owner of this?" Joan asked him one day.

"No—why should I wonder? It comes to me just as it came to Uncle Greg," he replied casually.

"And what have you either of you done?"

"Done? You don't have to do things all the time. You're always harping on doing something," he said testily.

"It's only chance that did it, you know. You might have been a boy down in the factories in Farwell, just as well as not."



"I suppose you'd have liked me better, if I had been."

"I don't say that: Depends on the rest of your life as to whether you're as much good as the factory boy."

"What is it you want me to do?" he demanded.

"Beat me to the end of this path—" she laughed and galloped ahead of him. It was by such methods that she was getting Dick awake. She knew she could never preach him into anything—she had to sting him into interest. She was already planning an object lesson in the dirty little town of Farwell. When the time was ripe she would take him on a tour of inspection.

Joan wrote to Miss Earl about it, in one of the several letters she had written that lady.

"It's a very complex job, you've selected for me. The house runs all right—at least I'm letting it alone until I see whether I stay on. I doubt if I do. Mr. Farwell objects to me, because I stick out of the picture. I keep waking him up when all he wants is to doze. I let him severely alone as much as I can.

"But the boy is a different story. He is a bright, lovable creature, full of all the wrong ideas. How can we build up a democracy when our privileged class lives as these people do, rolled up in cotton batting? I'm trying to unwrap the boy. I tutor him and we read together and talk and argue every day. We play tennis and swim and I've learned to ride horseback, so at least I fulfil my duties of amusing the boy. Shall I make a good Socialist of him? I believe I could do it!"

A portion of Miss Earl's answer ran as follows:

"I told him in the beginning that his situation was unusual so I cannot rely upon precedent in the case,

but I should say, offhand, that making a good Socialist out of a boy millionaire, was not a part of the duty of a young woman, placed in a household as an authority on domestic science! However, I never advise the people I place. My duty is accomplished when I place them. I feel sure that your intelligence will not let you do anything contrary to good taste."

"Bless her heart—she's warning me!" smiled Joan, as she read. "She never did anything in her life that wasn't in good taste—she couldn't—her ancestors wouldn't let her! But I didn't have any ancestors, I haven't any fine breeding; I'm just a working girl out of Whiting, Indiana, with a chance to make a convert. What do I care about taste? That belongs to Gregory Farwell and Miss Earl—I can't afford to have it."

Driven to her colours by Miss Earl's warning, she rode away into the town one morning when Dick and Mr. Farwell had gone to New York. She looked over the ground from the outside, as it were. She made friends with one or two women who sat in dooryards. She disarmed suspicion by telling how she had been born in a factory town, of factory workers, in the West.

"But we have better conditions than you do," she added.

"There's no use kickin' here—we've tried it," one of the women replied indifferently, "an' most of us are too poor to get out."

"Any unions?"

"Naw—company won't stand for it."

"They'd have to, if you got organized."

"They've tried it here."

"Don't your children go to school?" Joan asked, trying a new tack.

"Naw—there ain't no school, 'ceptin' away cross town, so none of the young-uns round here go."

"That's a shame!"

"Sure—they's lots of shames 'round here," said the woman.

"I wish I could get you women who don't work in the factories, to let me tell you some things we learned in Whiting. Will you?"

"Sure—talk's cheap."

"Could we get them together?"

"Come 'ere, Johnny—" called the woman, and a rag-tag boy appeared. "Go 'round and tell everybody that's home to come on over here, there's somethin' doin'. That'll bring 'em," she added, as he sped away.

They began to gather at once from all directions. Sodden, work-worn women, just like her mother had been. They were avid for any excitement, from a fight to a prayer meeting. At sight of Joan, they halted. Mrs. Rafferty, their would-be hostess, urged them in.

"Come on—she's a factory girl—she's goin' to tell us sumpin—" she exclaimed. So they leaned on the fence or squatted on the steps, eyeing the stranger suspiciously.

"Be ye a boy or a girl?" inquired a wit, which brought much laughter.

"Girl—" smiled Joan. "I wear breeches, because I ride astride. You can stick on a horse better that way, than side-saddle."

"Where do ye come from?"

She explained her job at the Hall.

"Well—what's the latest news in society?"

"One of the latest items is this—that the rich get

their rights because they take them. They don't sit down, like a lot of fish, and let somebody get ahead of them, just because they're too stupid to fight. You people all live in this town, your husbands vote here—Why don't you make this town build a public school in this district so that your children can get some education and grow up to be capitalists themselves?"

"My, ain't she a stylish talker?"

Joan laughed. She knew them—their prejudices and suspicions.

"If you people want to wake up here, I'll help you. I've been through all this and I know. You're my people and I'm yours—Get your men stirred up on this school business and I'll help you."

"Better not tell King Farwell that!"

"But I'll just get him interested, too."

This was greeted with laughter.

"Say—you're the merry joker, you are!" they gibed.

"Wake up and make some demands on him! Don't let him live up there in the idea that you love the way things are down here and you wouldn't change 'em for worlds! You're the people to stir things up, you women. Get busy!" said Joan, mounting her horse. She waved her hand at them and galloped off.

"I may have to leave the Hall, but my work is right down here," she said gravely, and rode through the woods with knit brows and unseeing eyes.

## CHAPTER IX

FOR two days after the inspection of Farwell, Joan pondered her situation. She had obvious duties toward her employer, she was truly interested in her work with Dick, but down in those dirty huts were her people—the people she was to dedicate her life to. It seemed a cruel jest that she could not help one without hurting the other. Her own basic honesty refused the thought of double dealing. The end of the month of probation was at hand, and if these men wanted her to stay, she knew she wanted to accept, but there must be no misunderstanding in that agreement.

When Mr. Farwell asked her to come to his study, on the day in question, she went reluctantly, because she dreaded the interview. He rose and smiled in his genial way at her, inviting her to sit down. His smile always disarmed her. She characterized it to herself as "a misleading smile." "It makes you expect a man of the broadest human sympathies, and it hurts to find he has no sympathies at all," she had said over and over in her thoughts.

"I suppose you realize this is the last day of the month of probation we agreed upon, Miss Babcock," he began.

"Yes, I do."

"I feel that the month has given us a fair idea of one another, don't you?"

"Ye-es."

"Superficially, I mean, of course. The whole test of the family idea seems to me to be harmony. Now, should you say that you and Dick and I are sufficiently harmonious to live together?"

"I think we have managed comfortably enough for this month. I think Dick and I could always manage."

"You find me the disturbing element," he smiled.

"No—I am that. It is your atmosphere here, and I invade it—"

"Like an army with banners," he finished for her, and she smiled—

"Like an army with trumpets, I suppose you think!"

"Dick is the real point. As you say, you and he 'manage.' I can see now how the boy needed just such a dynamic personality as yours to fire his faculties. I'm not unaware that Dick and I are under great obligations to you, whether you stay on with us, or not."

"Thank you."

"I know that life with us is not exciting. The education and companionship of a seventeen year old boy cannot be very absorbing to a girl of your capacities."

He hesitated, looking at her for her answer, but she felt it to be prefatory to the sentence he must deliver, so she made no reply.

"I confess that nothing could be farther from my original intention than to install a young woman of your type as the head of my household."

"I remember," she nodded, and quoted the requirement which had been written on Miss Earl's card—"Well bred, college education, taste for books and fine arts."

He stared.

"Was that what I asked for?"

"And I am what the gods provide!"

They both laughed at that.

"You told me that if you stayed on, you would install some system into my housekeeping—"

"Yes—I would."

"Would it be very upsetting?"

"It might. Mrs. Craddock is a bit old for new tricks."

"That's the trouble."

She looked at him anxiously.

"How do you feel about us?" he continued. "If I keep out of the way, can you put up with us?"

He watched the slow colour mount her face. She certainly was bewitching to look at.

"You mean you want me to stay on?"

"If you will. I hate to think of the effect on Dick, if you abandon us."

He wondered at the grave look that came into the girl's face. She looked older, in a second.

"I want to stay," she began.

"Good—then that is settled."

She rose as if to go—hesitated—

"Mr. Farwell, is it true that you are the owner of the factories in Farwell?"

He stared.

"Yes, as Dick's guardian, I am, Miss Babcock—Why?"

"Have you ever gone over them?"

"No—I haven't been in them for years. When there is anything to discuss, the managers come to me. Why?"

"You wouldn't care to go and look at them, would you?"

"I would not."

"Dick will own them some day?"

"Yes. When he is twenty-one."

"He's never been over them either, has he?"

"Not that I know—"

"Do you mind if I take him through those factories?"

"You? Why should you?"

"Because I would like him to see how the lives of many people are all tangled up with his. Being the owner of those factories is a man's job—it ought to be Dick's job—he ought to be training for it, now."

Gregory frowned slightly.

"There are capable men in charge of it now, thank you. I can't think of Dick mixing up with it."

Joan faced him with shining eyes.

"Give Dick a chance to choose!"

He could not understand her ardour; it irritated him slightly.

"Certainly. But if you think the inside view of the factories would fill Dick with a longing to run them, I beg of you to reason with him. If it seems so important to you that he should see his holdings, by all means take him. I'll give you a card to the manager."

"I promise not to try to influence him in the matter."

"I don't think you need worry about him. My experience with Dick leads me to believe that he will always choose the easiest and most comfortable way of doing things."

How she hated his scoffing!

"I think you scarcely realize that Dick is at the very door of manhood. His enthusiasms are alive, his emotions are ready for the torch—"

"Well?"



"Don't you see that I can sway the boy's whole future?" she cried, angry at his cool obtuseness.

"You mean he is in love with you?"

She flushed scarlet at that.

"No—I mean that his imagination is awake. Don't you see you teach him only a negative philosophy—mine is positive."

"You mean your theory of—I suppose you call it service?"

"Yes, I mean that."

"I know you're a very clever young woman—what you say of the boy's state of mind may be true, but I also know Dick."

"Do you give me leave to convert Dick?"

"I should enjoy watching you try it."

"Oh, you can't laugh at everything!" she cried. "This is so serious, and you only scoff!"

"I'm not scoffing. I find your fervour inexplicable and exhausting—so few things are worthy of fervour. If we were in a play, now, you would challenge me to a struggle for the soul of Dick—" he smiled.

She kept her self-control with difficulty.

"I shall show Dick the factories, as I see them."

"Why do you care so much about those factories?"

"Because I was born in the shadow of one; because my father lost his life in a factory accident, and my mother dragged herself through one, day in, day out, until the welcome grave opened to her. They are my people down in Farwell— Now, do you understand?"

Gregory rose to his feet.

"I beg your pardon—" he said.

"I offer to resign, Mr. Farwell."

"Why should you?" gravely.

"Can I serve you and Farwell too?"

"What do you want to do there?"

"Clean it up—make it decent."

"Hopeless."

Her laugh was a taunt.

"You can't do it without stirring up trouble."

"Probably not."

"I won't have that."

"You could do it yourself, without trouble," she said.

"I'm afraid you must choose between us after all, Miss Babcock. It seems necessary for us to be theatrical."

She hesitated.

"You won't let me take Dick there, now?"

"Yes—but I hold you to your promise this time, that you will not influence *him*, to stir up trouble. We've managed to keep things quiet there for some time, and I can't have any interference."

There was no lack of force in his voice this time.

"Possibly you will not decide the question of your greater duty, Miss Babcock, until after Dick's tour of inspection?"

"I would like to think it over a day or so," she replied.

"By all means. I'm obliged to you for playing so fair with me."

"You've been fair, too," she said.

He smiled at her.

"If you are labour and I am capital, that line is not in our rôles at all."

"It's the key to the whole solution," she answered quickly. "That's why I'm so eager for your party to begin to be fair!"

"Must we begin? Why doesn't your party try it?"

"We can't. We'll respond, if you'll only let us. But you have the power."

"There you go with your eternal responsibility," he protested.

"You shirk but you don't escape," she said, and left him.

Out on the terrace Dick sat at a book-littered table. The sun specked his yellow hair and fell across the rich brown of his sun-burned neck. At sound of her step, he looked up, his whole face lighting with welcome. Then he came toward her.

"Where *have* you been?" he complained. "I've been waiting half an hour. You act as if my education were of no interest to anybody."

She put her hand impulsively on his broad shoulder.

"Dicky—Dicky—your education is of such vital importance to so many people!" she answered gravely, with quick tears shining in her eyes.

"I say—what's up?" he asked. "Has Uncle Greg been plaguing you?"

"No—I'm afraid I've been plaguing him."

"Good thing! He needs it. Cocky old beggar, Uncle Greg. He needs stirring up."

"Why don't you stir him up?"

"Nope—you're the one to take him in hand."

"But I don't want to go about stirring everybody up."

He tipped his chair onto its back legs and looked at her.

"You can't help it!" he said.

## CHAPTER X

**J**OAN wrote:

DEAR MISS EARL, The incredible has happened! Mr. Farwell has asked me to stay. Stranger still, I want to stay. But I thought it my duty to tell him that I intended to rouse Dick to his responsibilities in regard to those factories I wrote you about in the town. He was very scoffing about my ability to do that, so I threw down the gauntlet to him, my philosophy against his, for Dick. He thinks it will amuse him to watch me try to make a good employer out of Dick. You've no idea how incensed I get at his eternal jeering at things! If only the Lord would arouse him with a thunderbolt (not fatally)!

I told him about my people in Whiting, because he challenged my interests in the workers. I also admitted that I wanted to clean up that town, and in order to do it, I might make trouble for him—therefore I tendered my resignation. He refused it. He roused himself enough to order me to let his employes alone and he exacted a promise, already offered by me, not to try to influence Dick to make trouble. "Trouble" is the one terror of Mr. Farwell's life. If he could be sure of uninterrupted tranquillity, he would ask no more, I'm sure. Think of it—a grown man, worth millions, sliding through the days like a shadow!

He agreed that the boy should inspect the factories; he has promised me a card to the superintendent. It seems to me that no responsibility that can come to me could equal that which I face with this boy. His mind is virgin soil, and what I plant is what is to grow and flower. I know I have a personal influence with him that frightens me. He thinks what I say must be right. He knows absolutely nothing of the world of work-

a-day people. He has never denied himself anything, done anything for anybody. He is just a big, lovable child, and what I know I must teach him will hurt him. But he must not grow up to be like Mr. Farwell, of that I am sure.

You see the problems here are all psychological, none of them practical, material. How sardonic that a course in domestic science could land me in such a tangle!

I cannot promise you "the good taste" which you appeal to in your last letter, dear Miss Earl, but you may rely on my scrupulous honesty. One of the complicating features is that I feel myself to be your representative here, as well as the missionary of my working people. I shall act with deliberation and a prayerful sense of duty.

I wish you would tell me frankly how you feel about it all. I have grown to look upon you as a sort of mother confessor—do you mind?

With cordial regards,

JOAN BABCOCK.

This was the letter which Joan dispatched to the head of the Professional Women's Bureau, the night of the talk with Gregory.

Now that she had "had it out" with her employer, and explained the situation to Miss Earl, she felt suddenly freed. She could let things drift for a little. The main thing now was the education of Dick—Farwell must wait for him. It might take her a year to prepare him just to truly see Farwell. Now that it was settled that she was to stay on, that she was to be permitted to carry out her plans, a wave of gratitude swept over her. She wanted to sing and dance.

It was something of this mood that caught Gregory's attention at breakfast the next day and made him say,

"Dick, has Miss Babcock seen our cave?"

"No—not yet."

"I suggest a pilgrimage there today. We can go on horses and Jergens can bring the lunch after us, or we can motor to the edge of the forest and walk in—any way you like."

"Great idea, Uncle Greg!"

"Could you close your school for a day, and come, Miss Babcock?"

"Gladly—I'd love a day off."

"You see, Dick, you work Miss Babcock too hard—"

"Don't you worry about my working her!" protested his nephew.

"How shall we go, Miss Babcock—horse or motor?"

"I vote for horses."

"Good for you. So do I."

"Horses it shall be. If you'll order the lunch, I'll give Jergens instructions about meeting us."

"Anybody any special longings in the direction of food?" she inquired.

"Plenty of everything," called Dick as she departed.

It was a perfect specimen of summer day. They set forth in high good humour on their holiday. It was the first time Mr. Farwell had joined them on their rides, and he brought the pleased colour to Joan's face when he complimented her horsemanship.

"I had a stern, but excellent teacher," she laughed.

"She's some credit to me," bragged Dick. "Show the gentleman how you can gallop," he ordered, and touched his horse sharply.

She was off after him in a flash, and Gregory thundered along behind them for half a mile.

"Good work!" he cried, as they pulled into a walk, flushed and hot. She turned a glowing face upon him. "How alive that girl is—she rides as passionately as

she plans to save Dick's soul and mine," was his inward comment.

She and Dick laughed and chaffed and teased each other along the way—they raced, they played circus tricks, like a couple of boys. They made Gregory feel a trifle elderly, but on the whole he was highly diverted by their antics. It certainly was a new light upon the girl. No wonder she focused the boy's attention, if she played with him like this. Gregory had an idea that she was always acting the mentor, or trying to improve his mind, but evidently this idea needed amending. Ever since her boast of her humble origin, Gregory had found himself watching her with interest.

She had a quick delight in colour, and now and then she exclaimed over the things that gave her pleasure.

"You are fond of the country," Gregory said to her.

"I love it. I had no idea how satisfying it would be. I've never been in ideal country before—I mean woods like this. It was barren prairie about my home. There were only parks in Chicago. They were beautiful—but this—it is so lovely on a day like this, that it hurts."

"We must take her to the Forest of Fontainbleau and to Como, and some of the other places we like, Uncle Greg," said Dick.

"Dick, don't talk like that—it interferes with my heart action!" exclaimed Joan. "Those are just wonder-words in a dream-vocabulary, those aren't things that come *true*."

"Don't they? We'll take you in a minute, if you want to go. Uncle Greg is the best old guide you ever met. He knows every out of the way spot in the world, I guess, and he never expects any guff about cathedrals."

They all laughed.

"I leave it to you, Miss Babcock, if I could have higher praise."

The trees were forest trees now, with underbrush in some places, or low hanging boughs to be avoided.

"The trails are all gone, Dick," commented Mr. Farwell. "Are you sure of the direction?"

"Yes, I know the way."

"We usually keep a trail cut through, for the horses," he explained to Joan. "Evidently the men haven't got to it this summer."

"I think it's more fun without trails. How will Jergens get in with the lunch, though?" she added.

"He can see our path where we've tramped down the brush," answered Gregory.

"He's such a fool! I'll let you two go ahead and I'll wait for him here, rather than to miss the lunch," said Dick.

"Nonsense—he'll find us. Go on, Dick."

It was very slow going, because they had to pick the way, so that the brambles would not cut their horses' legs. It was nearing two o'clock when they finally came to the clearing in the forest, before the mouth of the cave. Dick looked at his watch.

"Gee! It's nearly the middle of the afternoon, and no food! Jergens will never get here."

"Cheer up, Dick, starvation never takes place within twenty-four hours of the last meal," comforted Mr. Farwell.

"I hope you ordered lots of grub," he appealed to Joan.

"Tons. That's what's the matter with poor Jergens. The hamper is so full, he can't carry it."

"He'll have a snap going back, I promise you. Let's



take her in the cave—it'll keep our minds off our hunger."

"Lead the way," nodded Gregory.

So Dick peered into the mouth of the cavern and went cautiously in. Joan came next and Gregory last. They held each other's hands.

"Tell her the story, Uncle Greg, it's more spooky in the dark."

"The tale has to do with the tragedy of a great-great-great-great grandfather of ours, also named Gregory Farwell," said Gregory promptly. "He brought a young wife, Gertrude, to Farwell Hall, where he lived by the gun and the rod. He was many years her senior, and his hunting left her much alone. But in his household lived a retainer, young and handsome. One day when the lord of the house returned, he found his bride had fled with her lover. He followed them—he found them. He brought her back, and the story goes he walled her up in this cave, with a boulder against the opening. Years after they found her whitening bones," he concluded, in the properly impressive tones.

"Poor lady!" said Joan.

"The end of the tale and the end of the cave," said Dick. "Right about face."

They turned and clutched their way back to the light.

"Queer how depressing it is underground," Joan said. "If we lived there, I suppose it would seem as normal as the top of the earth. I'd rather live in the air."

"Look here—I don't want to live *on* the air," exclaimed Dick. "You two sit down and I'll go back over our tracks a way and help Jergens carry the grub."

"Keep to our tracks, now, Dick, we don't want to have to send a search party after you," cautioned Gregory.

"Nothing but the scent of food will get me off the track. I'll be back in a little while."

He tramped off. Gregory found a comfortable spot at the foot of a tree for Joan, and stretched himself out beside her.

"Are you frightfully hungry?" he asked her.

"No—are you?"

He shook his head.

"I rather like your idea of our living in the air. Looks rather jolly up there," he remarked, looking through the interlaced branches. "How would we be housed, do you think?"

"Air castles, of course," she replied.

"Reached by airships, defended by air guns."

"Heated by hot air!" she added, laughing.

"Would you have the people fitted out with wings, like the angels in the ecclesiastical pictures?"

"Oh, no, they aren't modern. Those wings were too big and unwieldy, and I'm sure they'd be considered unhygienic in these days. Small bi-plane effects on ankles and shoulders would be the newest thing."

"Aëreated foods, of course—" he contributed.

"Cultivated in sky gardens, by each inhabitant."

"Oh, you'd have them all work?"

"I would."

"No capitalist class?" he teased. "No owners of great tracts of clouds, no monopolists of sun rays, no trusts to corner moisture, or to manufacture liquid ozone?"

"No, no, no! A free people, superior to the law

of gravitation, each one living on the fruits of his own effort."

"That would be the only 'fruits' they could raise in your socialistic cloud colony."

"I'd have it a true democracy!"

"With woman's suffrage?" he chaffed.

"How could it be a democracy without?" she demanded.

"Better not have any education," he advised.

"Why not?"

"It only tends to emphasize the inequalities in minds. Or would you have a regulation sized mind, worn by all?"

"Only minds with union labels need apply!"

"That's the idea. Necessary to the kind of community you want."

"Couldn't you manage to suppose a state of fraternity where the ones who had the most ability would give their excess to the others?" she asked him.

"I cannot."

"I can."

"I hope I'll never be condemned to live in this sky parlour place!" he exclaimed.

"Why?"

"Bore me to death. I'd rather live in that cave. So would you," he added. "Nothing for you to do in that perfect one-mind community. You'd be the same kind of waste there, that you accuse me of being here."

"I don't accuse you of any such thing," she retorted.

He turned a laughing, scoffing face up to her. A ray of sun struck across his eyes.

"By Jove—that sun is—" he looked at his watch—

"it's four o'clock!" he exclaimed, getting to his feet.

"Where do you suppose that boy is?"

"I think we'd better get on the horses, and find out," she replied.

"Suppose you stay here in case he comes back. I'll go over the track and shout for him. He should have taken his horse," he grumbled, as he saddled.

"How long shall I wait here? The trail would be difficult after dark."

"I'll come back for you; you aren't afraid?"

"Certainly not."

"Nice outing we've given you—no lunch, and now Dick lost!" he complained. He mounted his horse.

"Hurry back—I shall be anxious—"

"Don't worry—the crazy youth may have got off the path. I'll find him in no time."

He rode away, under the trees, leaving Joan to face the unaccustomed silence of the forest.

## CHAPTER XI

FOR some time Joan could hear Gregory shouting, but presently that died away, and the intense stillness settled down upon her. To Joan, unused to the forest, its quiet was oppressive and terrifying. She closed her eyes and tried to sleep, only to start at every sound of cracking twig or chattering squirrel. A big bird flapped low overhead and she rose and walked about. She went to talk to the ponies, to feel their companionship. Why hadn't Gregory set her a task to do? She hated inaction. Time wore on slowly, and nothing happened. The sun dropped lower. The shadows slanted through the trees and flooded the place with melancholy.

Joan decided she could not bear it—she must do something. She found an envelope in her bag on which she wrote a line saying she had joined the hunt and would return. She pinned it to a tree. Then with great difficulty she saddled her horse and started on the trail.

She rode slowly, looking right and left. When she had gone a half mile or so she came to a place where it looked as if two trails had been made, by a trampling down of the brush. Her instinct told her that the one to the left was the one they had come in on, so maybe Gregory had veered off here, making the other. She called and called—first Dick, then Mr. Farwell. But no answer came except the shrill outcry of birds, who

whirled up from the trees, chattering their angry protest. There was a tree near the parting of these two paths, and to it she tied her horse and set out on foot, down the trail to the right. She was no woodsman nor had she a knife, so she did not blaze the way on trees, but she tore up two handkerchiefs and tied bits of them to branches and when they were used up she laid sticks in such a way that if she could see them, she could recognize them. It was getting dusk now, the long summer twilight setting in. She hurried on, stopping to call at intervals. All signs of trampling done by a horse or man had vanished, but still she hurried on, stumbling over things, frightened at the sudden scamperings about her. Something must have happened to Dick. Finally she tripped on a log and fell over it. She was so tired she did not get up. It was almost dark, just a grey shadow of light. Somewhere there was a breaking of twigs, as if under foot. She sat up and shouted—there was an answering call and Dick plunged into view, bedraggled and hot with effort.

"Dick—is that you?" she called to him.

"Joan—good Lord!" he cried and hurried to her, kneeling beside her. "What is it? What happened?"

"We were frightened about you, and Mr. Farwell went to look for you. I couldn't stand it to wait, so I set out too."

"But I'm clear off the track—I've been batting about for hours," he said.

"I can find the way back if we hurry before it gets too dark. I've got my horse tied down here. Pull me up," she commanded.

He helped her and she tottered a little.

"You must be nearly dead!" he protested.

"I'm all right. Come on, now."

She took his hand and led the way. She had no idea she could find her white flags in the dark, but she saw that the boy was worn out, so she took a firm initiative. For what seemed hours they stumbled along, trying to find Joan's landmarks. When they came to the first handkerchief strip they set up a shout and went ahead with new courage. They did not talk, they were too tired.

Once they were sure that they had lost the lead entirely and they set up a halloo. A whinny answered them.

"It's the horse!" cried Joan. "We're all right."

Finally they came in sight of the mare and knew they were safe.

"She'll have to carry us both," said Joan, mounting. "Get up behind—I know the way now."

So Dick managed to get his aching body astride the mare and they moved slowly toward the woods which surrounded the cave.

"If Mr. Farwell has got back he is probably furious at me," said Joan, her only remark during the long ride. As they neared the wood they saw the smoke of a fire and again they shouted. This time the answer came and as they approached, they saw figures waving. Mr. Farwell was at Joan's bridle in a second.

"I—I found—" she began, and as Dick fell off the mare, Joan would have followed suit, had Mr. Farwell not caught her. He lifted her from the saddle and carried her to the fire, where he laid her on a blanket.

"Coffee—Jergens," he said, and when it was brought he lifted her head and administered it.

Dick stumbled into view and sat beside Joan, with concern.

"She must have walked miles!" he said. "She isn't dead, is she?"

"No—just faint and exhausted," Gregory encouraged him. "Drink your coffee, boy," he added, as Dick's black-circled eyes were lifted to his face.

"Is there food?" asked Dick.

"Yes, sir, lots of it," answered Jergens.

When Joan opened her eyes upon the scene, she found herself supported by Mr. Gregory's arm, her head back against his breast; she was completely dazed for a minute. She found his answering smile reassuring, and then she saw Jergens with a plate piled high with food.

"Oh—food!" she exclaimed and sat up.

They devoured food—there is no other word for it. They drank the coffee from two big thermos bottles, as well as a quart of sauterne. They exchanged almost no words during the process.

But when they had consumed every scrap of Mrs. Craddock's excellent luncheon, they stretched out around the fire, with groans of satisfaction and each one told what had happened to him.

Dick had gotten off the track and wandered for hours. Gregory had ridden straight out to the road, which led up to the forest and there had found Jergens. He, in turn, explained how he tried to get in with the big hampers and realized that he could not make it, so he had gone back to the motor, thinking Dick would return for the food. Gregory had brought the hampers to the cave on his horse, Jergens following on foot. When they found Joan gone, it was already dark and they had lighted the fire as a signal.

Then Joan told how she grew restive and decided to start off too, and had eventually found Dick.



"Such a comedy of errors!" exclaimed Gregory at the end of her recital. "I suppose I should have known better than to expect you to sit still and wait."

"I tried—but I couldn't do it," she smiled back at him.

"Are you nearly dead?" Dick asked tenderly.

"No, Dick, I think I'll live now!"

"I could kill myself for doing this to you," he went on.

"Why, I'm all right," she protested. "You couldn't help getting lost."

"Well, you're a peach to come and look for me, and I'll never forget it," he exclaimed passionately.

"Nothing heroic about that rescue," laughed Joan. "I collapsed over a log and Dick nearly collapsed over me."

Gregory was grateful to her for coming to the rescue so quickly and saving the boy from his overwrought feelings.

"Next time we have a picnic, we'll chain Dick and the lunch to a tree at the beginning of the party," remarked Mr. Farwell.

"Isn't it nice the way the fire throws shadows!" Joan exclaimed, as she lay on her back looking up at the great trees above her. They all stared up into the night sky for a little in comfortable silence.

"Let's spend the night right here," suggested Dick.

"You'd be so stiff after a night on this damp ground, you'd never walk again," replied his uncle. "We ought to be on our way now, children," he added, rising for a consultation with Jergens.

When he was gone, Dick leaned over and laid his cheek against Joan's hand. She started a little, then

she lifted it to his head for a second and remarked gently.

"Poor tired kid!"

"Don't—" he answered, getting to his feet and going to join the men.

Presently Gregory came to Joan.

"We're short a horse," he said. "It seems hardly fair to ask Jergens to walk back. Would you mind riding with Dick or me and letting him use your mare?"

"Not at all," she answered.

"We're ready, then," he said, offering his hand to pull her up.

She went over to where the horses were saddled.

"Come with me, Miss Babcock?" begged Dick.

She hesitated a second.

"No, thanks, Dick. I think Mr. Farwell's horse is stronger and bigger."

Dick mounted and went ahead to cover his disappointment. Jergens, with the hampers, followed on Joan's horse—Mr. Farwell helped her up, mounted himself—drew her into a comfortable position before him, and the cavalcade started.

They did not talk—it was slow going, and difficult. Once or twice Gregory felt her body relax against him in sleep, only to stiffen again, resisting her weariness.

"Go to sleep—I won't let you fall off," he said.

She made no answer—only shook her head. Long after midnight they came to the road where the machine waited. Dick and Joan were transferred to the back seat, while Gregory elected to ride and lead the other horses.

The two in the motor were asleep almost at once. They had to be forcibly aroused at the door of the

Hall. They staggered indoors, blinking and cross, like children.

Gregory came up to Joan and took her hand.

"Good night, Miss Babcock. Sleep all day tomorrow, if you can. Permit me to say that you are a very good sport."

"Amen," added Dick, yawning.

"Good night and thanks," replied Joan. She left them with the feeling that this experience had made them for the first time three friends.

## CHAPTER XII

**I**N SPITE of her numerous duties at the Hall, Joan managed to follow up her first visit to the town. She made friends with all the children, and established a speaking acquaintance at least with the women in the shanties. She went about among them and noted the conditions under which they lived. She got to know their names and how many people there were in their families. They talked frankly enough of their troubles and joys, so she soon learned which husbands were drunkards, which sons were malcontents, which daughters were "bad-uns."

As the heat of the summer came on, Joan often rode down to spend an hour with Mrs. Rafferty. A word to the boy at the corner drug store and at the proper time, when the clans had gathered, a relay of ice cream cones would arrive, or a bucket of iced lemonade would appear, enough for all the hot, dirty children, as well as their mothers.

They all liked her—she furnished diversion in their dull days, as well as refreshments; occasionally a remark of some factory hand would be repeated to her, warning them against her.

"Say, Miss Babcock, our Patsy sez yer a spy—" piped one of the many Raffertys, as Joan rode up one day.

"Does he, now?" she answered, busy tying her horse to a telegraph pole.

There was a rush from the house, a flash of red hair

and angry face and the young offender was caught up in a grip of steel and punishment administered to the tune of howls. It brought Mrs. Rafferty onto the scene.

"Good day to yez, Miss Babcock. Patsy, leave Jim alone—"

"I'll learn 'im to blab what I say—" replied the eldest, with renewed attention to his brother.

"Did you ask him not to tell me?" asked Joan.

He turned to her in some surprise, upon which Jim managed to escape.

"I did not!" he answered truculently.

"This is my Patsy, Miss Babcock—" intervened Mrs. Rafferty. "Now, Patsy, don't give her none of yer lip!"

Joan advanced to him and held out her hand.

"I'm no spy, Pat—don't you worry about that. I'm a worker like yourself."

He shook hands with obvious reluctance, and he looked her in the eye with active suspicion. He was a youth of about the same age as Dick. A shock of curly bright red hair, surmounted a handsome, keen Irish face—eyes full of fire at the moment, but usually full of mischief. He had the white freckled skin that goes with that colouring.

"I've heard a good deal about you, Pat, I'm glad to meet you," Joan continued.

"B'en livin' fer this day, I suppose," he retorted.

"Just," she answered and laughed. He grinned a little, reluctantly. "Holiday today?"

"Nope—fired."

"Too bad. What happened?"

"None of your business," he replied and walked off.

Joan looked after him a second. She was sorry

he resented her interest. He must be won over, of course, for here was a personality. This was the stuff leaders were made of. Mrs. Rafferty gave her a shrewd glance as she came toward the "stoop" as they called the platform in front of the shanty.

"Your Patsy doesn't like me," Joan remarked.

"Don't pay no moind to 'im—he's that sore wid de foreman at the factry, him that's always a-firin' him. He's a big sthiff, called Larsen, an' him an' Patsy ain't frindly."

"Do you know why?"

"Sure, I know why. Larsen is a Swede, and he's a foighter—wit de gloves, ye know. When he first come he was tellin' how he cud lick the whole town wit wan hand, an' so the byes got thegither and made 'im up a purse av five dollars and invited him to meet our Patsy."

"Can Patsy box?"

"Can he box? Can anny Irishman foight? Ye bet he can. They tell me he ain't scientific, but he sure is quick on the comeback. The Swede was slow and heavy, an' Patsy wore him out an' beat 'im up. When Larsen got to be foreman, he began to pick on Patsy. He fires him for the least thing!" she concluded hotly.

"But he takes him back?"

"Sure—he's got to. Patsy's one of the best workers. He's what they call the pace-maker. He keeps the men cheerful and workin' to the limit."

"I see. He looks smart."

"Sure he's smart. I wisht he wasn't so smart—his pay envelope'ud come in more reg'lar."

"Don't you worry—Patsy isn't through yet. You may be proud of him before he's much older."

"Who says I ain't proud of 'im?" demanded Mrs. Rafferty.

"Are the men going to do something about the school?" inquired Joan.

"Naw—they say it's no use—they ain't got time to 'tend to it."

"I wish we could get your son to take it up."

"Patsy wouldn't bother 'imself."

"I could talk to him about it," Joan said thoughtfully.

"Here he comes now," remarked his mother, as her son approached. "Miss Babcock wants to ask ye a favour, Patsy," she grinned.

An angry flush came over his face.

"It isn't a favour to me—it's a favour to the kids of this town," Joan amended, as he started to go into the cabin. He stopped and looked at her.

"The only real weapon for us against the capitalist is education," she said. "You know that."

He nodded.

"The reason they put it over on us, is because we're ignorant."

"But we ain't always goin' to be ignorant!" he burst out.

"We are, when we let the Town Councils run us, like they do in this town."

"What d'ye mean?"

"There's no school for this district. It's so far to the one public school that the factory people's children can't go—or don't go. You're all voters here. Why don't you head a delegation of citizens to pack the next town meeting and demand a school in this district?"

"You mean *me*?"

"Why not? You want these kids to have a chance, don't you?"

"Sure—"

"You can tell that to the Town Council, can't you?"

"Sure."

"It would be a big thing to do for our side," she remarked casually, rising to go. "Good-bye, Mrs. Rafferty. Go to it, Pat. I wish I could help you."

She nodded to them, untied her horse and rode away. On the way home she went over and over the conversation, wishing she might have said more or said it better. If that boy could be aroused to fight for the things that were important, nothing would stop him.

As for Patsy, he pooh-poohed the idea that this much discussed young woman could indicate his duty to *him*. But her phrase, "it would be a great thing for our side," kept popping up in his mind. He found himself considering ways and means of approaching the Town Council. True to his Irish Blood, "politics" was his natural element. The head of the Council was the Mayor of the town. The local election took place in the fall. The vote of the factory district was a very big asset in a re-election. These facts Patsy turned over in his mind.

Just to try out the possibilities of the scheme, he brought up the subject of a school in Grady's saloon one night.

"Aw, shut up, Patsy. Has the wimmen been after you, too?"

"They have not," he defended quickly. "'Tis me own brain that's been after me. Why is it we've got no school nearer than Third Street? 'Tis because we're too down-spirited to demand our rights. A pub-



lic school is our rights; now, why don't we git one fer our kids?"

"How many kids you got, Patsy?" jeered Aron Kovlatski.

"If I had seven, like you got, Aron, I wouldn't be lettin' the capitalists squeeze the life out of 'em."

"Aw—what ye givin' us?"

"'Tis nothin' to me, if you fellows can't see yet that education is the only way ye'll ever get even wit' 'em. We're payin' fer public schools, an' we ain't gittin' um. Is that a square deal or ain't ut?"

"They ain't goin' to build no schoolhouse because we tell 'em to, Pat."

"Ain't they? If you had some education, so's your brain 'ud work, Jim, ye'd know that Ben Card wants our votes to re-elect him."

"What's that got to do with a school?"

"It's got all to do, ye nut! If a gang of us goes to the next Town Council meeting, as we gotta right to do, an' tells Ben Card that if we get a schoolhouse in the fall in this district, we vote for him, an' if we don't git a school we don't vote for him, there'll be somethin' doin'."

They all laughed. It seemed to be a good joke to play on Ben Card.

"Go to it, Patsy!" urged one of them.

"You tell 'em the plot, will ye, Patsy?"

"I'll tell it to 'em all right—if ye'll get a gang to go down wit' me. We might git up a good foight, mebbe," he added, happily.

The idea took hold. The promise of trouble was an inducement—anything to break the monotony. Patsy found himself possessed over night of a new following which was quickly dubbed, "Patsy's army."

How they marched in, a hundred strong upon the slumbrous town meeting, is history in Farwell. How Patsy made a speech, ending up with these words:

"We're a peaceful, law-abidin' community in the factory district; enjyin' all the privileges of our free country, such as foine streets, an' water works that works now an' thin, on alternate Thursdays; our parks an' churches in the district would be a pride to any place, but phwat we dropped in to call yer attention to, is that with a population of 432 children, under factory age, we've no public school fer thim to go to, where they can learn to be mayors or councillors. If ye cud be a-remedyin' this little oversight by September, Mr. Chairman, we'd be willin' to let things be as they are—but otherwise we'll be lookin' fer a more public spirited candystate fer Mayor."

The excitement caused by this speech, punctuated by laughter and applause from his army, was undeniable. The Chairman attempted to call attention to the delay necessary to provide a building, but Patsy suggested the use of the long vacant Union Church building, and after considerable argument the meeting adjourned with the promise of the Council to consider the idea. Patsy was appointed on a committee to investigate and report to the next monthly meeting.

The boys of "the army" led him triumphantly off to Grady's to drink his health and laugh over the dismay on Ben Card's face, during Patsy's remarks.

"The kids'll get their school all right. We'll call it the 'Patsy Rafferty'!" cried Klovatski.

Patsy refused the opportunity to get drunk in celebration. He walked home by himself, elated and happy. He wondered what that girl from the Hall would say about it? Then he laughed up at the stars.

Patsy Rafferty on the Mayor's Committee, an important and responsible citizen! The idea amused him greatly. Then the boy in him cropped out, and he added joyously.

"Gee! It'll make Larsen sore!"

"Is that you, Patsy?" whispered his mother as he tiptoed in.

"Yep."

"Did ye go to the meetin'?"

"I did."

"What did ye do?"

"Give 'em some of my lip!" he teased her.

## CHAPTER XIII

THE days ran by so swiftly and happily for Joan that she scarcely noted their going and coming. The common anxiety they had shared on the occasion of the picnic had brought Gregory into the friendly triumvirate. They were all friends now, on a plane of comfortable give and take. If Dick's devotion showed signs now and then of becoming too personal, Joan was clever enough to get it back into the key where she felt it belonged. It was no part of her plan to let the boy fall in love with her.

Gregory saw the danger, too, and watched her manœuvring with interest and some amusement. He thought it might be very good for Dick to fall in love with her, but evidently she did not intend to allow that. He entirely forgot that one of his strictest requirements of Miss Earl was that the mistress of Farwell Hall must not be alluring to Dick. However he had forgotten most of the qualities demanded of Miss Earl's candidate.

The autumn brought long hazy days when the three of them motored far over the countryside—sometimes for two or three days. They took long rides on their horses, or Gregory refereed their tennis games. They were well matched and good to watch, in their fierce fights. Joan gave Dick real battle and he lived in daily fear that she would beat him. If Gregory so much as veered toward Joan's advantage, in a decision, they both fell upon him.

"A fair field and no favour here," Joan would shout at him.

Both men found her sensible, good tempered and companionable. They grew to take her for granted, in the comfortable way of men. As for Joan, at peace with herself in regard to her real work, as she still called it, sure that her best service would come in the education of Dick, she had come into a belated girlhood, freed of anxiety, of struggle. For these happy, luxurious months, she played with Dick for companion, like a light-hearted girl.

The ease and the outdoor life gave her such health as she had never known before. It expressed itself in pink cheeks and shining eyes, as well as in unflagging good spirits. Her laugh was everywhere. Just as her body and spirit were being fed, so now was that power in her, which for lack of a better word we call magnetism, growing stronger and more impelling. Both men felt it—Gregory gave voice to it on a day when he came upon her swinging up the road by herself, singing aloud. He walked his horse up behind on the grass, not to interrupt and when she turned to him and laughed:—

"Is that horse rubber-shod?"

"I didn't want to interrupt the concert," he replied.

"You can't say I sing around the house and spoil things for you—I do all my carolling out on the road."

"Why don't you sing at home? . . . I—we'd like it."

"Dick heard me once. He advised me not to take it up as a career."

"The young cub!"

"I love his frankness."

He dismounted and walked along beside her.

"Why do you walk on this dusty road?"

"I've been to the village."

"Why didn't you ride—or take a motor?"

"Thought it would do me good to walk. I'm getting such habits as will be the ruination of me. Motors and horses for the likes of me!"

"I am sure they were made for the likes of you. Want a ride?"

She considered a moment—then nodded, and was up in the saddle, sitting sideways, before he could offer a hand to mount her.

"You're a disconcertingly independent young person," he remarked, leading the horse along slowly, letting him nibble a branch now and then.

"Am I? Do you like them helpless?"

"Them?"

"Us—females—"

"Even the helpless ones aren't—are they?"

She smiled at his puzzled face.

"Women, even stupid ones, always seem to know just what it is they want, and they go after it. Men are so apt to drift—I can't imagine you drifting."

"But I've known since I was eight years old, what it was I had to do. How could I drift, when there was so little time?"

"There you are! My contention is that even the women who only want husbands, don't drift husband-wards—they rapidly and determinedly paddle in that direction."

"Why not—it's the only way to get what you want."

"Suppose you don't want to get anything, except the essence of joy out of every day?"

"You have to be rich and lazy, to get that."

He laughed and led the horse down a path into the woods.

"Do you know how changed you are?" he inquired, as the horse stopped to nibble grass.

"Am I?" anxiously.

He nodded.

"How?"

"Well—when you came you were a determined, efficient, rather fierce young woman—but now you are so comfortable—on occasions you are so charming!"

Her laughter startled the horse, who lifted his head and walked on.

"Men are such precious things!" was her disconcerting reply.

He jerked the bridle and halted the march.

"Precious?" he objected.

"Yes—*precious*—gullible—naïf! I'm revolutionizing you all the time, only now I've learned how to do it, without making so much noise. That is what life at the Hall has taught me. There is no real value in noise."

"Are you revolutionizing me?" he inquired—then after a contemplative pause—"I wonder?"

They sauntered along slowly in silence for a bit, while Gregory digested that remark.

"I'll grant you're making a new man of Dick; I admit the system you've installed in the house, but I didn't know you had turned your attention to me yet. I'd been hoping you would."

"It's what you might call my indirect attention. It's like indirect influence."

"At least you do not despise my uselessness so forcibly as you did at first."

She turned her frank gaze on him, her face full of concern.

"What an abomination I must have seemed to you! Why didn't you send me packing?"

"I don't know why I didn't," he replied.

"I've grown to understand your point of view better, now that I've lived your kind of life. Don't you believe it would settle every fight in the world, if every fellow could live the other fellow's kind of life for a while?"

"It would be almost more painful than the ills it was meant to cure," he said, with a rueful face.

"If this were not such a perfect day and I were not so content, I would wish you were not so stand-pat," she mused aloud.

It was after that talk that Gregory began to show interest in Dick's education. He read some of the books that Joan had provided, and Dick left lying about. There was nothing feminine in the fare she fed him—nor did she let him off when he slacked, as his tutors always had done. But the astounding thing was that for the most part he did not slack.

When Gregory suggested a two weeks' motor trip through the Berkshires, they both assured him that they could not spare the time.

"But you aren't going to enter him for exams until spring, are you?" he inquired of the teacher.

"No, but as he has never learned anything, we have about ten years' work to do in that time. It is almost winter now—six months is only a minute."

"Now aren't you sorry you never would study, Dick?"

"No—why should I waste all that time, when she can put me through it in a year?" grinned the boy.



"It's marvellous how you keep him at it!"

"I don't keep him at it. It's his responsibility, not mine. I only work when he wants to—"

"That true, Dick?"

"Sure—she's put it all up to me," sighed the student.

"It's worked out very well. He knows what he has to do—he is old enough to concentrate, he has a good mind, and he can go ahead very fast. He may be right about those years when he wasted time. It may have been a good thing."

"Isn't she great?" Dick appealed to his uncle.

"That's the way she gets me to grind on, like this. She may get me in with honours. Probably kill those old entrance deans with the shock of a Farwell entering with honours!"

"Have you an antidote for his modesty, Miss Babcock?"

"He has six months of good hard work to his credit," she defended him. "Six more and we'll be getting somewhere."

"Six months and I'll be one of the natural leaders of thought in America—" remarked Dick sweetly.

"Instead of the world record-beater for ignorance at seventeen," amended Joan.

So things went on smoothly enough at the Hall, but in the village there was no such harmony. Joan's casual word to Patsy Rafferty about the schoolhouse had brought after it a comet's tail of consequences.

The committee which the Mayor had appointed, with Patsy as a member, had reported fully and favourably on the possibilities of getting Union Church ready for a schoolhouse in the fall. They gave an estimate of the expense of repairs, and the salary of a teacher.

But after the report was turned in, nothing hap-

pened. Whenever Patsy asked for the Mayor's intention, in private conversation, or whenever he demanded it, in meetings of the Town Council, he was called out of order or silenced in some summary manner. The Town Council meetings began to be exciting. The factory men came in larger numbers and grew more unruly. Finally one night things came to a climax, and there was a general mix-up. At the next meeting the Mayor ordered the factory men excluded—whereupon they overran the guards at doors and windows and broke up the meeting.

Patsy was not satisfied with these proceedings. He saw that it was only leading to jail for his men, and in no way furthering their object. So after much thought on his part and much discussion among his fellows, they decided to go in a body and offer to back the Republican nominee for Mayor, if he would give them a promise in writing that they should have the schoolhouse subsequent to his election. Patsy and a committee visited him, and after consultation with his managers, he took up their offer. Patsy's committee was to organize the factory men into a solid vote.

Once this news got abroad, Mayor Ben Card woke up. He sent for Patsy, but Patsy did not come. Then he went to see the Irishman, in his own bailiwick. He assumed an injured air. What was this news he heard of the factory boys supporting the opposition candidate?

"You had your chance an' you trew it away," replied Patsy.

"You sold out—after me puttin' ye on that committee?" demanded the Mayor.

"I told ye the price av our votes was the schoolhouse.

When we found you wouldn't pay it, we got a candidate that would. That's all."

"But, Patsy, I was only makin' up me mind—"

"Ye had two months to make up yer moind. Ye can't put over annything on us, ye know, Ben—we ain't fools."

"What'll ye take to get the boys back into line fer me, Patsy?" Ben said softly.

"How would ten thousand dollars suit ye?" grinned the boy.

"Quit yer kiddin', Pat—"

"Quit it yerself, Ben. We're through with you an' your gang. It's time we had a change in Farwell."

"Ye durty black Irish whelp, ye!" roared the Mayor.

"You get in my way an' I'll break you!"

Patsy laughed, and the Mayor saw red.

"Be careful, Ben—you're liable to bust!" he warned.

"I'll bust you!" shouted Ben.

"No, ye won't—ye can't do it, an' ye know it, ye great big noise! Ye'd better make frinds with me, Ben, because the byes will do loike I tell 'em—because why?—because I got some brains. That's why I got the laugh on you, Ben, because your coco's empty! Go 'way now, an' lave me *think!*"

The big man rose to go. He was shaking with fury. He started to speak, but the boy's grin fairly choked him. This was his parting shot:

"I'll get you, Patsy, and don't ye fergit ut!"

## CHAPTER XIV

**J**OAN came into Mr. Farwell's study, and laid a ledger open before him on the desk at which he sat.

"Here are the accounts for the last month, Mr. Farwell. Will you look them over?"

"Thank you. Have you looked them over?"

"Naturally. I entered them."

"Then I do not need to bother with them."

He glanced at the figures.

"You reduce the amount every month, don't you?"

"We're getting the departments systematized—that's all."

"Even Mrs. Craddock?"

"No—I must omit Mrs. Craddock. Her mind resists system as a hard rubber ball resists a dent," Joan answered seriously.

"Aren't you afraid Craddock will put poison in your tea?" he mildly suggested.

"You should watch me at table. I never eat anything which could possibly have been prepared by Craddock," she smiled.

"Is she disagreeable to you?"

"Oh, no, she doesn't like me—but it isn't necessary that she should."

"Do you enjoy all this detail?" he asked her.

"No, I hate detail—but I like organizing things."

"And people?"

"And people. Do you remember my telling you that I wanted to take Dick over the factories at Farwell?"

"Yes."

"Will you give me a card of admission to the proper person?"

"Certainly."

He wrote the card and gave it to her.

"Thank you."

"You think Dick's judgment is of value, on conditions in Farwell? Or is it his emotions you intend to appeal to?" he inquired gravely.

"I've tried to give him some background of judgment, in the few months I've had with him. I've never said one passionate word to array him on my side—I've been absolutely square with him," she answered.

"I am sure of that. I only want to remind you that there is danger of rousing ignorance and misdirected enthusiasm. Dick has no word to say as to the management in Farwell, until he is of age."

"I understand that. I don't want him to interfere or become a nuisance about it, I only want him to see things as they are, to meet the men and women who work for him, and hear their point of view. Is that too much, do you think?"

"I've no desire to hamper Dick, you understand. I am only warning you that he is passionate and headstrong—that you may start something you can not stop."

"Thank you. I take the responsibility."

The conversation apparently ended there, but Joan felt that it was not finished until late in the evening of that day. She was finishing a letter in her room, when Dick's shout from the terrace called her to the window.

It was a clear autumn moonlight night, and the two men were pacing up and down.

"Come out, it's wonderful," Dick urged.

"All right—be down in a minute," she answered. She picked up her white sweater and slipped it on over her white dress. As she came across the flagged expanse, Dick exclaimed,

"She looks like Queen Mab, doesn't she, Uncle Gregory?"

The elder man smiled.

"Slid down on a moonbeam, eh, Poet?" he teased the boy.

"A trifle insecure for my weight," laughed Joan.

"You wasted a lot of time indoors," complained Dick.

"I had a letter to write, Dick."

"You always *have* to do something. I wouldn't have your conscience for anything on earth."

"Nor I yours, my child. I conceive your conscience to be a flabby little affair, dying of fatty degeneration," she retorted.

Gregory chuckled at Dick's "Ouch!"

"I bet yours is a long-legged, lean nag of a thing, worked to the limit. What do you suppose Uncle Greg's looks like?" Dick continued.

"A dimple!" said Joan instantly, rewarded by their shout of amusement.

"She thinks we're awful slackers, you know, Uncle Greg."

"Does she?"

"If I don't look out, she'll make a working man of me. What do you suppose she's going to do with me tomorrow?"

"My imagination fails me."

"Take me over our factories in Farwell, and introduce me properly to our employés!"

"H-m!"

"Better come along."

"No, thanks."

"The smells would kill you. Uncle Greg is death on smells. He always makes Jergens shoot through Farwell—"

"Don't make my case out worse than necessary, Boy. Miss Babcock despises my way of life sufficiently as it is."

Joan turned toward him quickly, her eyes shining.

"Indeed—indeed, I don't despise it. Everybody ought to be able to live their own way," she said. "I shouldn't presume to criticize your way."

"I never thought much about it, Uncle Greg, until I began to read all these books and things. Do you know about modern factory equipment—about the advantage of the short day and the increased efficiency of the workman who has decent conditions of living?" inquired Dick.

Gregory stared at his nephew, blew slow rings of smoke into the air above him, before he answered.

"No, I do not know about these things—the human problems have never interested me especially, you see. I have no place in the world in which I find myself—a world of brutality, of greed, and of materialism. I conceive all its standards to be false. I will not belong to a world which can only express itself through money and power and publicity. What place has beauty in such a scheme of things? Look at the art of the times—at the music—at the poetry! Brutalized—decadent! I'll have nothing to do with it, since I cannot change it. Don't tell me I can do my part," he ob-

jected, as Joan exclaimed—"one individual—a thousand individuals can do nothing—the whole fabric of life must be changed before existence can be endurable on this planet."

He stopped a second and there was silence. "I prefer to have my life like this night—calm, beautiful, remote. The world is shut out."

"But it cannot be like that—there are many stormy nights. What do you do then?" asked Joan.

"I go inside, draw down the blinds and remember the nights like this."

They all looked about at the white radiance—breathed in the autumn smell of burning leaves and listened to the night sounds. Dick stirred uneasily.

"I think I'd rather jump in, and smash things up and get 'em fixed to suit me better," he said earnestly.

Farwell looked at Joan.

"You have an apt pupil! Smash away, Dick, if you must, but remember that you'll do no good—that it will be unchanged, in spite of you—unless you live to see a new age."

"He *is* the new age—don't you see?" cried Joan. "We're all called to account some time for our stewardship—we can't escape by saying we're born out of our time."

"You think the individual counts, then?" inquired Farwell.

"I think if every man helped one other man who needed him, we could make a new world."

"But if the man who was helped was no good—had always to be carried—what then? Better to let the present system crush him out, isn't it?"

"Certainly not. It's like saying don't bother to improve prisons because some of the men are hopeless



criminals. How can you say—or how can I say, what a world run on the principle of brotherly love could do to humanity?"

"It seems such a dream to me that I would not think of saying what it might do," remarked Gregory.

"It isn't such a dream—the germ of it is in the world now—Dick and I may help with it."

"But how can you bring about brotherly love by contention and strikes and bad feeling between employers and labour? I think you said that might be necessary," Farwell remarked.

"I admit that's a blunt weapon, but the soldier must fight with what he finds at hand. Sometimes a thing is justified merely because it focuses attention upon a wrong. That's what a strike does. It isn't my way—but it is one way."

"What is your way?" asked Dick.

"I'd appeal to the sense of fairness and justice and decency of the man who has the power. I'd show him it was better business to give labour a fair deal and decent conditions. Isn't it better to rouse his highest instincts, to do the square thing, than to rouse labour's worst instinct to fight and destroy, in order to get its rights?"

"But why should all the virtues be assumed by the capitalist?" inquired Farwell.

"Because he has the ultimate power to solve the whole situation. He will get back what he gives, in friendliness, instead of hatred, in good service, instead of bad. It isn't a theory, Mr. Farwell, it's a fact, proved over and over again in this country. Look at the results in the factories of Henry Ford, the National Biscuit Co., The National Cash Register Co., Filene's Dry Goods Store in Boston, in the many co-operative

experiments all over the United States. It's just common sense."

"I'm going to have a look at those places," Dick said.

"Dick, it is four years before you can revolutionize the works down in Farwell," smiled his uncle.

"I can get all ready, so the minute I get my innings I can do something," replied Richard.

"The wise young Judge—a Daniel come to Judgment—" Gregory exclaimed.

"Dick, if every boy in the world could say tonight what you just said, the new world would be begun," Joan said, so seriously and tenderly that the lad's whole being answered her.

"Oh, if I could only get your new world for you, I would!"

"Adam was the first man, Dick, who got a new world for a lady."

"Oh, Adam!" exploded Dick—"he was a fool!"

They all laughed, and Gregory added, "O youth—youth—thy god-like folly!"

"No—no—thy God-given valour!" said Joan.

Gregory turned his face toward her again.

"I withdraw in favour of your God!" he observed.

"Well," said Dick, "I'm going to bed and get a good night. I can't understand half you two say. I've got to get my rest, for maybe I'm going to be a loving capitalist after tomorrow."

"Amen," Joan exclaimed.

The boy said his goodnight and left them.

"Honourable Enemy, the first honours in the fight are yours, I should say," Gregory remarked.

"Hear the truth—for the truth shall set men free!" was her answer.

They walked up and down the terrace for half an

hour in silence, enjoying the night with its enchantment. Now and then Gregory glanced at the quiet figure beside him, her face lifted to the stars, her attention rapt, "on some diviner thought intent." He made note of her charm, when she was at peace and silent.

## CHAPTER XV

“**W**HAT time does your ‘Seeing-Farwell’ expedition start?” inquired Gregory at breakfast.

“About ten, doesn’t it, Miss Babcock? Are you coming along, Uncle Greg?”

“No, my child, I’m not. It is a good day to spend indoors with an open fire, to my thinking. You won’t like it, Dick. There’s no romance in Farwell.”

“I’m not looking for romance,” Dick burst out indignantly. “What do you take me for—a sentimental puppy?”

Gregory smiled and the conversation ended. But when they set forth at the appointed hour he called them a “Good luck, Samaritans,” from his corner by the fire.

It was a bleak grey day, with the first nip of winter in the air. The dead leaves blew and rustled, in whirls of dust. The motor ran swiftly but the ride seemed longer than usual. Dick chatted along, but Joan had a sense of finality such as she had known before in her life, when some experience was over and done with. Summer, this perfect summer of all summers, was dead. Did Gregory prophesy truly that Dick’s initiation might start something they none of them could stop? She wished she had his philosophy of drifting.

“Have you ever seen Saunders, the head superintendent at the works?” Dick was asking. “He seems

to me a kind of human machine. He's got a shut-up face."

"I know he isn't very well liked by the factory hands."

"Do you know them—the hands, I mean?"

"Yes—a good many of them. I want you to know them—you'll like them. There's a fellow named Patsy Rafferty, whom you are sure to like. He's about your age and rather like you, in some ways."

"What does he do?"

"He's a carder, and he supports his mother and six or seven children. But he's what I call a natural leader. He's leading a fight against the Mayor just now, and what they're pleased to call the School Committee, to get a public school for the factory kids."

"Haven't they got a *school*?" Dick demanded.

"No."

"But why not?"

"The workers have been too busy to demand it, I suppose. They can't understand yet, how valuable education is to their cause. But Patsy's got them started—he'll get it put through, I think."

"Is this where they live, in these rotten shacks?"

"Yes—this is the Raffertys'—where all the children are out in front—we'll stop on our way back," Joan said, "and call on Mrs. Rafferty."

"Does the company own these shacks?" Dick demanded.

"Yes. But the agent won't keep them in repair, and so they've gone to pieces rather. You'll see, when you get inside, that they're rather far gone."

"Who's the agent?"

"I don't remember. Mrs. Rafferty will tell you."

They drew up before the door of the main factory

building. It was the old type, with wings added here and there without regard to appearances. Other buildings grouped about it, with no apparent order. The trees had been cut down, and the grass was burned up and trampled, so there was no green on which to rest the eye.

Mr. Saunders greeted them sourly, in his office. He thought the inspection was the whim of a boy, who had no business to take up his time. He wasted none of it upon social amenities, but led the way out at once.

Dick's impression from this time on was blurred and indistinct. He was conscious first of noise, grinding, crushing, unescapable noise. Monster machines crowded together like elephants in a herd—they belowed and squeaked and trumpeted. The men who served them and fed them went quickly among them, at their work of tending. The room was artificially lighted by great high-powered arc-lamps which added a piercing light to the nerve strain. There was the sense of crowding, of men and machines shouldering each other in too close quarters. There was a fine dust in the air that made you cough. There were some places where only men worked, some where only women fed the open maws. Dick, on this first visit, got no sense of them as individuals. They were just human machines, feeding the others.

He heard Joan asking Saunders questions, some of them evidently irritating to him, for he answered brusquely. In one of the buildings, she asked to see the wash-rooms provided for the girls and suggested that Dick look at the men's. Saunders said that the employés didn't like to have visitors taken into those rooms, which were reserved for their use—but Joan was insistent that Mr. Farwell had said they might see

everything. So Saunders complied. When she met Dick and their guide after her brief review of the lavatory for girls, she saw that Dick's experience had been as painful as hers. She asked Saunders if there was any place in any of the buildings where the employés could gather.

"What would they gather for?" he demanded.

"Oh, some factories have lectures for the workers, or meetings of heads of departments to consult with their people—"

"Well—heads of departments don't consult the workers here. This is a shop—not a club," was his answer.

It seemed to Dick that hours of distress had passed before they got back to the crowded little hole Saunders called office. He mumbled a few words of thanks, to supplement Joan's remarks, and they were out in the raw, rubbish-laden wind that swept about the yards.

Joan saw that Dick was used up—she had never seen him look like that. He was perfectly white. He caught her anxious glance.

"The noise and those lights were awful!" he explained. She nodded. Jergens brought the car up to them.

"Shall we go home—or do you want to stop in the village and meet my friends?" she asked Dick.

She saw his look of longing at the car—it meant escape. Then he shrugged his shoulders and faced her.

"Let's walk over to those Raffertys. Jergens, go to the station at Farwell, we'll pick you up when we want to go back."

Jergens promptly disappeared. Joan repressed the desire to say "Good work!" to the boy. She led the way down the dirty path that cut across lots to the cot-

tages. In a moment the noon whistles would blow, and she wanted to be at the Raffertys' when Patsy came home for his dinner.

"Are they always as noisy as that?" Dick asked her.

"No—there's always noise in factories, of course, but they are making devices now to cut it down. It wears the workers out so fast nervously. The new type factory handles that problem better."

"And those lights—" he protested.

"They were bad. The new type is nearly all windows, so they rarely need electricity. Daylight is cheaper, in the end, because that arc-light is bad on eyes and nerves."

"It got on my nerves, like the devil!"

As they came to the cottages, women and children called out to Joan and she gave them greetings. At the Raffertys' she was surrounded by the dirtiest set of youngsters imaginable. They hung on to Joan and put their dirty paws on her clothes. Dick wondered how she could bear it. In answer to the uproar of greetings, a fat, red-faced woman appeared at the door and beamed on the new comers.

"Good mornin' to yez, Miss Babcock, an' to you, Mr. Norton, sir," she called.

"She knows me," said Dick, in surprise.

"Naturally, silly. They all know you. We've been over to have a look at the factories, Mrs. Rafferty, and we want to make a short call on you before we go out to the Hall."

"'Tis welcome ye arr, to me humble cot," laughed Mrs. Rafferty, leading the way into the parlour. It was a cold, damp place, with old wall paper, faded and dirty, hanging off in strips. It was furnished with rickety furniture of unspeakable hideousness and con-



siderable age. Some of the dirty children crowded in after them.

"We ain't got the fires started yit—it do be a bit chilly," said the hostess.

"Take us into the kitchen, Mrs. Rafferty, do. It's warm in there and so comfortable."

"I couldn't be takin' Mr. Norton into the kitchen," protested Mrs. Rafferty.

"Oh, do—I'd like it," Dick exclaimed.

"Come along wid ye, thin," laughed the Irish woman and led the way back through the uncarpeted hall to the kitchen, which at least was warm. It was also redolent of onions, past and present. There was a table with a red table cloth, where Pat was to have his dinner. There were indications that some of the Raffertys slept here, too. It needed paint and paper and a new floor.

"How many children have you, Mrs. Rafferty?" Dick inquired, as the number of staring eyes at windows and doors increased.

"I've six of me own—the rist is neighbours," she replied, driving them off.

"Isn't this house rather small for you?" he continued.

"Faith an' it is—but what's to be done about it? Patsy is me only bye at work an' we can't pay a cint more of rint," she said cheerfully.

Just then the whistle blew, and she rose at once.

"D'ye moind if I dish up fer Patsy? He's got his job back an' he don't want to be docked, fer bein' late."

"Go ahead, Mrs. Rafferty. We'll only stay long enough for Mr. Norton to meet Patsy. Come over here, Dick, and watch them come home for dinner," said Joan, leading him to the door.

The procession seemed a long one—men and boys, women and girls, swinging or hobbling or limping along as the case might be. Some of the boys were pushing each other, laughing and “rough-housing.” They called out jokes to the girls, who answered shrilly. Dick realized that they were just people; they were being regurgitated from the mouth of the monster, to get food and strength for themselves, so they could go back and be fed to it again.

“They seem a cheerful lot,” he commented in astonishment.

Before Joan could answer Patsy stumped in, and stopped at the sight of visitors.

“How are you, Patsy?” said Joan. “I want you to meet Mr. Norton.”

“How are you, Mr. Rafferty?” said Dick, holding out his hand.

“Patsy’s me name,” said the other, taking it.

“Ye’re to go ahead wit’ yer dinner, Patsy, Miss Babcock says,” remarked his mother.

“Sure, I’ll go ahead,” was his answer.

He went to the sink and performed a hasty and unabashed toilet, talking as he did so.

“Seen ye at the fact’ry. First toime I seen ye there,” he remarked.

“First time I’ve been there,” Dick answered.

“Some swell joint, ain’t it?”

“Nothing to brag about.”

“Dick never was in a factory before,” Joan said.

“Mother o’ Mike! Ain’t that quare now, an’ my Patsy brought up in ut, as ye moight say.”

“I’m glad av ut,” said her son, briefly.

“How about the school, Patsy?” Joan inquired.

"We'll git ut. The byes have got their mad up about ut, now."

"When is the election?"

He told her the date and the arrangement they had made with the Republican candidate, and how Ben Card had sworn vengeance on him, Patsy Rafferty, all while he absorbed his loud-smelling dinner, with an avidity and swiftness appalling to the onlookers. Dick tried not to watch him, but it hypnotized him. "Hog!" was the word that leapt to his lips, and yet he liked that frank, freckled face. He liked the fellow's lack of "side," his ease of manner. They had found him in a situation he could not change, so he made no apology for it. There was something upstanding and self-respecting about the whole thing. After all, table manners were not essential.

Joan asked Patsy about his feud with Larsen, and he laughed and told her they "had fixed it up and Larsen took him on again." This led to the story of the fight, and Dick's enjoyment of it helped the two boys on to a comfortable footing. Patsy tried to get Dick's ideas on the factory, but Dick did not commit himself.

"I never saw one before—and I have to think about it," he explained.

"Better come down an' take a job. Ye'll larn quite a bit about fact'ries an' other things, too—" laughed Patsy.

Joan saw from Dick's startled glance that that shot home. She rose.

"Well—we must run along. Hope we haven't upset your dinner too much, Mrs. Rafferty," Joan apologized.

"Divil a bit. Meals happens whin they happens in

this house, 'ceptin' fer Patsy," said that good-natured soul.

"See you before the election, Patsy. I hear you've done great work in organizing the thing," Joan said.

He grinned, without reply.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Rafferty. I'm coming again," Dick remarked, "if Miss Babcock will bring me."

"Come without her."

"May I? Thanks."

The Raffertys laughed. As they departed, Mrs. Rafferty said to Patsy.

"Ain't he got grand manners?"

"Yes, an' an empty nut. 'Niver saw one before—got to think about ut,' sez he."

"Give 'im toime, Pat. He ain't had your advantages," said his mother quite seriously.

They made one other stop, at a house in worse repair than the Raffertys'. There was an old sick woman, alone there. Her daughter worked in the factory and had gone back. The old lady was fluttered to have Dick come into her room. Joan led him about the tottering old shack before they left. She made no comments—none were needed. The places were obviously not fit for human habitation, that was all she wanted him to see.

Mr. Farwell had finished his lunch when they got to the Hall. So they had theirs alone, and rather a silent meal it was. Dick's mind reverted to Patsy's smelly repast, and the delicacies the cook sent up for them seemed unbearable.

"The hopeful thing about all this," said Joan, aware of his depression, "is that so much can be done to make conditions better. It doesn't have to be like that—

that's what makes life worth living, Dick, the thought that we can change it."

He glanced across the table to her and spoke earnestly.

"We will change it, of course. But don't hate us because we haven't done it before, will you?"

"Dear boy—of course not. Now this is what I ask you to do—not to take it too hard. It is not quite so dreadful to those people as it seems to you—because habit deadens sensibilities somewhat. Just think that with patience and study and understanding we can change the whole scheme."

When they found Gregory in the library he lifted a quizzical glance to them.

"Well, children, how endeth the first lesson?"

"Cut it out, Uncle Greg. I don't want to think about it, or talk about it. Let's get the 3 o'clock to New York and take Miss Babcock to a show," cried the boy passionately.

Gregory's lifted eyebrows were turned to Joan. She nodded.

"Good idea, Dick! Let's take him up, Mr. Farwell," she said enthusiastically.

"Delighted," replied that gentleman.

She had always refused their invitations to go to New York before, so Dick turned to her gratefully.

"You'll go? Bully! I'll tell Jergens!" he cried and plunged out of the room, but not before they both heard that sob in his throat.

## CHAPTER XVI

**T**HE New York party was a great success. Joan was deposited at an hotel, while Dick and Gregory were to spend the night at one of the latter's clubs. Joan plead a mysterious errand, as soon as they arrived in town, so they left her, to be called for later, in time for dinner "at the gayest place we can find," as Dick put it.

Joan went to a big shop, as direct as a moth to a flame. The problem of her clothes in the country had not troubled her. But she was determined that her host should not be ashamed of her, on this her first appearance with him in a public place. She intended to invest some of her savings in a proper frock, and she did. The fact that she fell into the hands of an intelligent clerk, who led her to the Misses' Department and sold her a white chiffon gown and a soft green velvet cape for what Joan had expected to spend on the dress alone, has nothing to do with the story. She had a real thrill over her first white satin slippers, and she went back to the hotel treading on air like a vain young peacock, and not a bit like one consecrated to big causes. She found that Dick had sent her a stiff, old-fashioned bouquet of tiny yellow-pink roses, in a paper holder, with long tulle streamers of green. She looked upon it with admiring awe, because it was her first bouquet.

When she came toward Dick and his uncle in her finery, she was rewarded for her efforts to do them

proud. She held her bouquet in one hand and her green coat floated behind her. Gregory looked really startled and Dick became incoherent.

The party from that time on, was never-to-be-forgotten by any of them. Dick threw himself into the occasion with an abandon which made Joan's throat ache, because she knew he was running away from Farwell. Gregory exerted himself, and was, as always, the perfect host. As for Joan, she fairly danced through the evening—the dinner seemed to her perfection, the play delightful, the supper club amusing.

"You have made Dick's party a great success," Gregory said, as they left her.

"I? Oh—I've only just been along!" she protested.

"You have been the party!" Dick exclaimed.

The next morning Joan went to see Miss Earl and took the noon train to Farwell. The men followed later, arriving for late tea. Dick seemed restless and upset. She tried to be very gay and diverting, but she could not hold his attention. Finally he burst out—

"Look here, you two—I want to say something."

"I think we would better not listen, Miss Babcock. He's been on some mysterious errand all day—" Gregory began.

"I saw one factory in New York and two on Long Island—" Dick interrupted him.

They both looked at him in surprise, and Joan started to speak, but he silenced her.

"I know you don't want to hear about yesterday, Uncle Greg, and I'm not going to be a bore about it. But I didn't sleep last night and I'll tell you what I want to do—"

"Go ahead, Dick," encouraged his uncle.

"I went to look at some real factories and now I know what we're doing in Farwell—" he said hotly.

"I want to remind you that you have nothing to say about what they are doing in Farwell, for several years, Dick."

"I shan't butt in—at least, I think I shan't. But when I get my chance at it, I'll raze every building and shack there to the ground."

"You may change your mind in four years."

"I don't want to argue with you, Uncle Greg. You see it your way and I see it mine. What I want to do is to go to Detroit and Dayton, Ohio, and see the Ford factories and the Cash Register factory. I want to know what they do in the best of 'em all."

"I see no objection to that, do you, Miss Babcock?" replied Gregory.

"No—it's a good idea, Dick."

"I want to take somebody with me—"

"You mean Miss Babcock?" smiled his uncle.

"No—a fellow who works down in our shops—"

"Patsy?" demanded Joan.

"Yes."

"Oh, Dick!" she exclaimed with pleasure, which Gregory could not understand.

"What's this?" he inquired.

"There's a young fellow named Patrick Rafferty. I met him yesterday. If I'm going to train for employer, I'd like him to train for superintendent. We might just as well begin together."

Joan got up and moved away to hide the tears that came to her eyes. She wanted to go and put her cheek down on Dick's curly mop of hair and say, "Good work, Boy—" but instead she rang for the tea things to be removed.



"How long a tour of inspection are you planning?" Gregory asked.

"We could do it in a week—Pat would have to be back for the election in Farwell."

"Upon my word, Miss Babcock, your pupil comes on fast. Election in Farwell? What do you know about that?" amusedly.

"It's important to get a new mayor and Patsy is running the factory men's organization. They want a public school—"

Gregory laughed.

"Take care, Dick—a little learning is a dangerous thing! Better keep your Pat out of the way over elections, if he's Irish and an organizer."

"I want to take some money from my savings bank to pay our expenses," Dick continued.

"You could hardly expect me to finance an expedition so sure to result in my own inconvenience," agreed Gregory.

"You've no objection, Uncle Greg?"

"None. When do you start?"

"As soon as Pat can get off."

"Do I have to write Saunders to give him a vacation?"

"No—Patsy'll attend to it himself, thanks," Dick answered and went out.

"Well, here's the first move, Miss Babcock. Did you suggest this idea?"

"No—I never thought of such a thing."

"You approve of it?"

"Oh yes—it is splendid of Dick to take hold this way. I was afraid the whole thing had sickened him—but this is a better scheme than I could have devised."

"Who is this boy? You know him?"

"Yes, he is a very talented lad—a born leader with a genius for organizing. He's only a couple of years older than Dick, but he's a marked man in Farwell now."

"What does he do in the factory now?"

"He's a carder—supports his mother and six children. He has a brain, which he uses, coupled with magnetism and wit."

"Is he a trouble maker?"

"I suppose you would call him that," she admitted.

"And you?"

"You don't organize people to be resigned—you organize them to protest."

Gregory considered for a moment.

"Will you remind Dick, when it is necessary, that I do not intend to put up with any interference in factory affairs, from him or from any acquaintances he may make in the village?" he said quietly.

The result of the conversation was that Dick and Patsy went on their pilgrimage. How the details were managed, what passed between them, Joan never knew. The day of their departure, she, together with Mrs. Rafferty and such friends in the town as were not at work in the factory, saw them off. It was the one topic of conversation, and as Patsy and Dick both refused to gratify curiosity as to their purpose, Joan was assailed as authority. She was glad to tell the truth about it—that she knew literally nothing about their plans.

The two boys, in the meantime, omitted all the preliminaries to getting acquainted. Dick's frank explanation of his plan and his need of an informed companion had prejudiced Patsy in his favour, at once.

He repeated Dick's estimate of him—"He's got no 'side'—that fella!" The trip interested him, and he saw a chance to be useful to his followers—so he accepted at once—broke the news to Saunders that Dick had commandeered his services, and the deed was done.

In the days of close companionship that followed, they grew to know each other very well. Dick had never had a friend in a boy of his own age and he found himself admiring Patsy enormously. The Irishman had a vast storehouse of experience to draw from, he had been hand to hand with life from early boyhood. He knew the game—he knew the motives that moved people, while Dick knew nothing of his kind.

But unlike most of his class, Patsy had no scorn for the other boy's way of life. He was, in fact, deeply interested in the tale of Dick's wanderings. They swapped stories by the hour, on the train, and enjoyed each other, like schoolboys.

In the factories which they visited, Patsy's accurate knowledge of working conditions and the men's needs, was of great help. Dick took notes on everything they saw—collected literature on it. He was absorbed in the idea of the new type shops. They talked to the men, who answered Patsy freely. They discussed Union organization and open shop—they inquired into working men's insurance schemes and pension funds. They investigated the best type of homes for working people. It was a week crowded to the guards with events and ideas.

All the way back on the train they worked over the data they had collected.

"I wish the whole factory district could be burned down!" exploded Dick. "It's the only way I can see to do anything with it."

"Here—you—have ye got no regard for the property of others? D'ye want the Rafferty silver and linen an' gran' clothes to be a total loss?"

"No—I don't want anybody to lose anything—but gee!—it's a sin to let the old rat-trap stand another day."

"I'll git the militia out ag'inst you, ye riotin', law-breakin' employer!" laughed the other boy.

They had planned their return, so they would get into Farwell late Saturday afternoon, before the election polls closed. Dick was in full possession of the facts in the case of Patsy versus the Mayor, and he was accordingly interested in the outcome of the election. They arranged that he was to telephone the Hall that he wouldn't be home until late, and he was to be in on any disturbance which might enliven Saturday evening—always a festive occasion in a factory town.

They got into New York late and missed a connection, so that they actually disembarked in Farwell about half past seven, after the polls had closed. The streets were crowded with noisy, frequently drunken people. Patsy was the middle of a circle as soon as they appeared on the street. The news was hurled at them from all sides. Ben Card, at the last moment, had papered the town with floaters saying that if he were re-elected, the factory district would get its school in thirty days. He had sent his men to work with the factory boys and here and there money had changed hands.

The opposition candidate made the new school one of the important issues of his platform, and feeling in the camps had been running high all day. It was said that Ben Card had sworn in sixty special police,

with orders to use their clubs, if there was any trouble. Patsy listened, asked questions, got some order from their chaotic answers—then he began to dart in and out of the crowd, making for Grady's saloon, which was headquarters for the factory men. Dick followed at his heels.

The saloon was crowded and Dick was not noticed. Patsy, every bit the general, got the report on his army. With few exceptions, the men had stood by their pledge to support the Republican. It was said that Ben Card was mad and meant trouble.

The vote from some of the smaller districts of the town began to come in—mostly for Card. The men listened a second, then the din went on. A boy ran in with word of a fight down on Main Street, and the saloon was cleared, as by magic. The crowd ran, like dogs in a pack, Dick and Patsy with the rest.

As they turned into Main Street they heard as well as saw the fracas. Cat-calls and hoots greeted the special police, but when they began to use their clubs, the sound changed to one of rage. Patsy made for the storm centre, Dick beside him.

"There he is—get him!" shouted a voice.

Dick turned, just as a big fellow grabbed Patsy.

"Ye're arrested!" cried the Special.

"Go on—what for?" objected Patsy.

"Fer incitin' to riot," answered the big one, giving his arm a twist.

"That's a lie!" yelled Dick.

Somebody hit him a whack behind the ear and he hit back.

"Run 'em both in!" yelled the voice of authority.

Patsy was still himself.

"Ye're makin' a mistake on this, Ben, take it from me! This is Dick Norton from the Hall ye're runnin' in!"

"Tell your jokes to the policeman, Patsy," said Card. Thereupon the two specials hustled the boys off toward the town jail, but not without a fight. Dick resisted furiously and nearly got away, but a second deputy came to the aid of his guard. As they caught him, he got a glimpse of Patsy's encounter.

"Hit him in the eye, Pat—kick him in the stomach!" urged Dick.

A blow on the head from a club settled his part of the controversy, but Patsy was badly beaten up before the two boys were locked in jail.

## CHAPTER XVII

UNFORTUNATELY for Patsy, and perhaps unfortunately for Farwell, Card won the election. It was probably a fraudulent victory, but Farwell was apathetic and it stood unchallenged. The arrest on Election Night might have been a much more serious thing for the Mayor's enemy than it proved, because as soon as it was discovered who Patsy's companion was, the boys were released, the matter was hushed up. It was the end of it so far as the Irishman was concerned, but Dick's sense of justice was so outraged at the treatment of his friend, that he insisted upon arraigning the Mayor for false arrest. The boys proved their case, the Mayor was fined and reproved by the Judge. But the important point was that they made a bitter enemy of Ben Card. He marked them both for vengeance.

Gregory was enraged at having to go to town, to bail Dick out, to appear in court at the subsequent proceedings, and worst of all, to having the affairs of his family on every tongue. He complained briefly and succinctly to Dick. He warned him that he could not be relied on, to come gracefully to the rescue when Dick got into scrapes. Dick must manage to keep out of jail.

"Very well, Uncle Greg," Dick answered quietly.

He found a sympathetic listener in Joan. He poured out to her his indignation at the way Patsy had been attacked.

"Why, if I hadn't happened to be with him, he says there's no knowing what Card might have put over on him."

Joan nodded.

"And they've elected that chump again. The factory men didn't stand by Patsy after all, or Card couldn't have won. I think they sold him out!" hotly.

"Possibly. He wasn't there to keep them up to the point—they don't really care so much about the school, most of them, and Card probably offered them money—"

"Well, but that's bribery!"

"So it is, but have you ever thought what a few dollars extra mean to some of those men? They're not used to standing together on things—probably Card's men caught some of them after they were drunk—"

"Are you excusing them for selling Patsy out?" he demanded.

"No—only explaining to you that the selling of votes is not the crime to a foreign-born labourer that it is to you. His vote is bought from the time he takes out his citizenship papers until he dies, usually. That's the way our American politicians train citizens."

"It's rotten!"

"Granted."

The trip of inspection had faded into the background beside this later experience, but Joan managed to get full details of it finally. She felt that like the first day in the factory, the initial effect of what he saw and heard in the model factories simply stunned him. The transformation necessary to make Farwell even approximate the new type was overwhelming. He repeated to her his belief that the only way was to burn down the present buildings and begin on a new plan.



"One of the things we must remember, is that we can't go too fast, that we can't change it all at once, Dick. You know what the Farwell conditions are, you know what ideal conditions are, now your four years must be put in, devising ways to make the change without upsetting your own interests or that of the workers. Suppose you turned all the people in the factories out of their homes and out of their jobs—what then?"

"But four years! Do you want those people to go on living like rats for all that time?"

"Yes—if it means a real and permanent change at the end of it—not just an upheaval. You can't expect to make Mr. Farwell or Saunders see things our way—we must wait for your majority."

"I think Uncle Gregory ought to be forced to look into it."

"It can't be done."

"Can't it? I'm not so sure!"

"Careful now, Dick—you'll only spoil everything if you try to take a hand in it now. Study and watch and wait until you've got it worked out, and then we'll do something."

"You talk like an old granny!"

"It's not my native tongue I'm speaking, Dick. But you would never have known about Farwell, if I hadn't waked you up to its needs. I don't want to come into this house and be friends with you all and then use you as a dynamite bomb to throw into the midst of your uncle's business. Can't you see how I feel about it?"

"I think Uncle Greg's comfort has been considered long enough—the comfort of some of those others ought to be thought of," he replied hotly.

"I just ask you to use your head, Dick, and not go off half cocked."

"Don't you worry," he reassured her.

He did not consult her about a visit he paid to Gregory's study, carrying the collection of facts and plans he had acquired on his trip.

"Uncle Gregory, I'd like to show you some of this stuff we got on the trip," he began.

"Much obliged, Dick. If it is facts about factories, I'm afraid I'm not much interested."

"Just look at this cut of this place, though—"

"Um—hideous architecture always, isn't it?"

"But look at the windows—look at the gardens and lawns about it."

"Very nice."

"Wouldn't you like Farwell to look like that, Uncle Greg?"

"I can't say I would."

"Do you like to have the people who support you live in rat holes?" hotly.

"No—I like not to think about it at all. Don't bore me with it, Dick."

"Good Lord!" said Dick, with such scorn and contempt as only youth can know. Gregory flushed hotly as the boy left him, then he sighed, finally he smiled very faintly.

To Dick the interview was intolerable. He went for a long ride all by himself to think it over, ending up with a call on Mrs. Rafferty, and a subsequent talk with her son.

"He isn't willing to do a thing—he won't look at the plans, or hear about them," he explained in despair.

"We'll have more toime to work on the idea—he

may not let ye do anything even when ye do git to be head av the company," he added.

"He's got to!"

"I always heard he had a will—"

"He has, but so have I. When I inherit, I'll run it— Besides, I'm right and he's wrong."

"Ye want to git all the facts there is to git, an' mebbe ye can coax him with 'em."

"That's Miss Babcock's way, too, but it's so slow."

"Aisy does it, Dick. There's no rush—"

"Do you know what I'm going to do?"

"I do not."

"I've thought it out this afternoon. Uncle Gregory thinks I'm nuts on this thing and that after a little I'll cool down and forget about it. Well, I'll show him. I'm going to make Saunders give me a job."

"Doin' what?"

"Whatever you did, when you began."

"But what's the idea?"

"I want to know the people that work for us; I want to know what they do and what they need. I want to learn the thing from the bottom to the top—"

Patsy whistled a long low tone.

"Say—" he remarked "—there's nothin' to this employer game—you belong with us. You're a foighter, ye arr!"

"Well—I'm going to see Saunders in the morning."

"With a note from Mr. Farwell?"

"Note nothing. I'm not going to tell Uncle Greg till it's all settled."

"Mebbe ye'd better tell 'im first," advised Patsy.

"Nope—I've decided on that."

"What does Miss Babcock say?"

"She doesn't know. I tell you, I only thought of it this afternoon."

"Tell her—she's got sinse."

"She'll try to stop me."

"Why?"

"She don't want to make trouble for Uncle Greg."

"Is she stuck on him?"

"Lord—no—but she's got some idea of being responsible about me. Rubbish, I tell her."

"Well—I dunno's they could stop ye, if ye want to earn yer six dollars a wake," grinned Pat.

The interview between Saunders and Dick next day was unsatisfactory in the extreme, from the boy's point of view. Saunders refused to do anything about it until he had orders from Mr. Farwell that Dick was to have a job. Dick assured him that he was not a child—that he was a free-born American citizen with a right to a job, if he could get it. But Saunders remarked that he wasn't running a kindergarten, that it was bad business to take him on for a few weeks, until he got tired of it. There was no need for him to learn the business that way, etc., etc. Dick left in high dudgeon and betook himself to the Hall.

He had to curb his impatience until lunch, as Joan was busy and his uncle not at home. He wanted a full audience when he exploded his bomb. When they were finally served to lunch and the butler gone, he began.

"Miss Babcock, would you mind if we had lessons at night?"

"Not at all, Dick, but—"

"That's all right, then. I intend to take a job in the factory during the day time—"

"What's all this?" inquired Gregory.

"I asked Saunders for a job today. He won't give it to me until you tell him to, so will you call him up and give him orders to take me on?"

Gregory laughed.

"What do you propose to do? More factory investigations?"

"I intend to learn the business, from the bottom up."

"Have you given up college?" amusedly.

"I haven't decided that yet—"

"Oh, but Dick, you mustn't give it up," cried Joan.

"I shall go on preparing just the same," he replied testily.

"Was Saunders enthusiastic over your idea?" inquired Gregory.

"He was not. He is a very objectionable person."

"Shall you report our terrible factory conditions to the factory inspectors, Dick?" his uncle continued.

"I expected you to laugh at me," the boy replied hotly.

"I don't mean to laugh. I just want to get at your motive."

"I want to understand the workers and find out what they need," his nephew answered.

"You don't see any way to manage it, but this rather theatrical idea?"

"I don't see anything so theatrical about it—"

"What do you think about it, Miss Babcock?"

"Of course I know it won't hurt him, to try his hand at a real job, but if it means his giving up college, I'd oppose it violently."

"Why are you so set on college? You don't think much of Harvard—you said so."

"Oh, no, I didn't, Dick. I said I wasn't sure it was

the best place for *you*. But of course, you must go to college. You aren't prepared to do anything yet—you're just a young uninformed boy, not ready to approach any of the big problems."

"Well, I'll go to college all right," he agreed, irritatedly. "What I want *now* is to get this job."

"The whistle blows at 7:30, Dick. You don't breakfast until nine," remarked Gregory.

"Don't you worry about my breakfast!"

"Seven-thirty to six are the hours."

"If they can do it, I can."

"They're trained to do it."

"Then I'll be trained, too."

"Is this your Patsy's idea?"

"No, it isn't—it's my own idea. Don't you think I ever have an idea?"

"I admit you have them—queer ones."

"I don't care what you think about them! Will you get me the job, or won't you?"

Gregory saw the boy was excited and nervous.

"If you and Miss Babcock both think that this is a necessary part of your education, I shall not oppose it, Dick. But I think I ought to have your promise that you will not stir up dissatisfaction among the workers. There are some phases of the business that have not come under your attention yet, and it is important that we have no trouble at this time."

"I'm not going to stir up trouble—what do you take me for?" the boy demanded.

"For a very trying student of sociology!" his uncle smiled, as he went off to telephone Saunders.

## CHAPTER XVIII

**T**HE Farwell factories manufactured coarse cotton cloth. The industry was fairly evenly divided between men and women, although in some departments the workers were entirely of one sex. There was no really skilled labour required, consequently wages were low. Futile efforts to organize among the workers had always ended in disaster for them, so a certain amount of peace had endured for two years, following the last abortive attempt to unionize.

Saunders, up from the ranks himself, disliked and distrusted employés. He ruled with an autocratic hand, with power unlimited, because Mr. Farwell could not and would not be troubled with factory details. According to his lights he served Mr. Farwell well. He was honest and conscientious. It was unimportant to him, whether the men and girls liked him or not; the point was whether their output was up to the mark.

He listened to Mr. Farwell's request that he take Dick on, he agreed with his belief that it would be for a brief period only. Mr. Farwell had no objection to the boy getting a good dose of it—he suggested that Saunders keep an eye on him, and not let any sentimental notions about the workers and their conditions interfere with discipline. Mr. Saunders thought he could manage that. It was with a certain grim satisfaction that he determined to set Dick to work carding cotton.

Dick presented himself about nine o'clock of his first day. He wore riding clothes, as he had come in town on his horse.

"Going to start in today?" Saunders inquired.

"Yes."

"Work begins here at eight o'clock."

"I know that. I thought since I had to learn what to do and how to do it today that I might as well come late."

"Better get some overalls—put 'em on in the lavatory. The foreman will give ye a locker. Then come back here."

Dick obeyed orders and returned in a flannel shirt and overalls, such as all the men wore. Saunders scarcely looked at him. He summoned the foreman.

"I want you to put Norton to work at a carding machine. He'll begin at six dollars a week. There will be no difference between him and other men in the shops," was his brief direction.

Dick went out with the foreman and into the inferno of noise and lint-choked air, and shrill lights which he remembered so vividly. The floors shook with the rumble of the elephants, and the keepers crowded each other as before. He was put to work under the direction of a man named Chech, a Slav. All morning he followed the big fellow up and down watching the process. At the end of two hours, when the whistle blew, Dick was fairly sick from noise and bad air. He followed the crowd into the open. He was conscious that they looked at him—he nodded to the men he knew and went on. Patsy caught up with him.

"Hello, Dick."

"Hello, Pat."

"How did it go?"



Dick turned a white face on him.

"I suppose I'll get on to it. The noise and light and that stuff that makes you choke is—is the limit!"

"You'll get used to it. Yer feet will about kill ye fer a whoile, but ye'll git over that, too. Where ye goin' to eat?"

"I don't think I want anything today. I'll bring my lunch from home tomorrow."

"Come on home wit' me. Ye gotta ate to kape up that job."

"But I—"

"Niver moind—there's plenty av stew an' the ould woman ull be glad to see ye."

So Dick went home with Patsy. Mrs. Rafferty gave him a hearty welcome, swept a few children out of the way, gave him a seat, and ladled out corn beef and cabbage and onions for him, with a generous hand. He performed his ablutions at the sink, using the Rafferty towel. He sat at the table and choked down the ill-smelling food, whenever Mrs. Rafferty or Patsy looked in his direction.

"Ye're kind av played out at foirst—I remember how Patsy was—but ye git used to it," encouraged his hostess. "Eat hearty now, ye gotta kape yer stringth up."

"Oh, I am," he assured her.

She gave him a cup of coffee, black and poisonous, which he drank. Their kindness and their sympathy braced him up, and when the whistle blew he went back with Patsy, feeling better. The first hour passed; during the second hour his teacher tried him out—the third hour he took over his job. Up and down, up and down he walked, feeding this never-satisfied ogre. There was no interest in it, no diversity, just back and

forth, like a horse on a treadmill, carding the cotton.

His feet were swollen and every step hurt him, his bones ached and he coughed incessantly with the lint in his nose. As time wore on the noise seemed to grow louder and louder—he was sick at his stomach and wracked with thirst. He staggered up and down, up and down, thinking each trip that he could not do it again. He wanted to cry or to faint, he didn't care which. But his subconscious mind kept telling him that he was on trial, the men were watching him—if he couldn't hold out until the whistle blew they would laugh at him—he would be disgraced. On and on again, in aching torment!

After ages of it, he saw signs of special agitation about him—a whirr—then silence, his machine stopped—all the machines stopped.

"Here, you—time to quit," called the man who had been his teacher.

He went out when the others went, stumbling along, hardly knowing where. The men got their caps and hats from lockers and Patsy helped him get his overalls put away and his coat and cap on.

"Played out—ain't ye? I know. Better come home with me and rest a bit—"

"I think I'd better get home," said Dick thickly—adding, "Drink?"

Patsy gave him water out of a dirty cup. The others hurried out and the two boys were almost the last to leave the building. Patsy was guarding his friend from any inspection or joshing. Over in front of the Raffertys they could see a runabout.

"Miss Babcock's at our house," he exclaimed. "Come on."

He led Dick slowly and in silence. Joan saw them

coming and came to meet them. She winced at sight of Dick's white, suffering face.

"Hello there," she called briskly. "I'd no idea you were going to begin your job today. I thought it was tomorrow."

Dick shook his head. Tomorrow—that had to be faced—tomorrow!

Joan went on chaffing Patsy and making Mrs. Rafferty laugh—ignoring Dick entirely.

"Jergens brought me in, in the runabout and rode your horse out to the Hall. Do you mind taking me home in this?" she said finally.

He got in painfully and she followed. She called their good-byes to the Raffertys as Dick started the car. Outside the town she said,

"You've got the wrong kind of shoes on, and Mrs. Rafferty said you did not eat any lunch."

He made no answer.

"Tomorrow I'll bring your lunch in to you, or send Jergens with it. Nice air, isn't it? . . . Want me to take the car? I can on this road."

He shook his head and they went on in silence. His set face looked ahead, up the road, and he let the car out to forty miles. He knew he could hold out to get to the Hall, if they hurried. When they stepped onto the veranda Joan noticed that he moved slowly and painfully.

"Hot bath, Dick, and bed. I'll send up your dinner."

"No, thanks," with dignity.

He laboured up the stairs without a groan, and Joan could not see for tears. Gregory came upon her, her swimming eyes lifted to the boy's departing back.

"Dick?" he said.

She nodded.

"Is the boy all right?" anxiously.

She nodded again.

"Then why—?" he inquired gently.

"Oh—I don't know—" she evaded. "He's a fine boy—Dick," she added pointlessly.

Dick came into the room, after Gregory and Joan were seated at dinner. He walked with the same care, but his pallor was supplanted by a high flush.

"Well, Dick, I hope you bring home a working man's appetite," was Gregory's greeting.

"Sorry to be late," the boy apologized to Joan.

She nodded and took full charge of that dinner. She talked and laughed and told stories, she managed to get Gregory started on tales of adventuring in far places—she watched Dick all the time without looking at him, and protected him every minute. After the first two courses he began to listen and pay attention. Then she teased him about something, made him retort, induced him to laugh. His colour went down and his eyes were less bright.

Gregory watched the entire performance with interest and understanding. He could see that the boy had had a hard day—he was perfectly willing to assist Joan in her efforts to entertain him. He thought she rather spoiled him—women always would spoil him. Considering that she approved of this nonsense, she seemed to be getting very little satisfaction out of the experiment—tears first, and now this deliberate effort to enchain Dick's attention.

He saw the boy draw Joan's arm through his as they went to the living room. He smiled at her, like a grateful puppy. Once comfortably settled she put Dick's favourite records on the victrola.

"Is Dick being especially petted tonight?" Gregory inquired wickedly.

"I don't know—are you, Dick?"

"Hadn't noticed it."

In the middle of the second tune he went to sleep. So Joan made an excuse for going out of the room. She called to him and he stumbled out to her, stiffly.

"Bed now. I'll have you called at six?" she inquired.

"Yes. And—and thanks," he added.

"I know all about it, Dick. I congratulate you," she said proudly.

"It's just hell!" the boy answered and went upstairs.

"Did you get him off to bed?" Gregory smiled as she re-entered the room where he read.

"Yes."

"You aren't enjoying this state of his initiation?"

"No—I know what it means—the first weeks in a godless industry like that—" she began and stopped.

"What does it mean?" he inquired.

"It would not interest you," she answered—"it's ugly and brutalizing."

"But you wanted Dick to go through with it?"

"I wanted to be sure Dick could!"

"And are you sure?"

"Yes."

"It shows 'the stuff he's made of'—isn't that the phrase?"

She nodded.

"You don't forget that I'm very fond of Dick, do you?"

"No."

"I know you're fond of him, too."

"Very."

"We're both proud of him when he does well?"

"Yes."

"There's always a reservation in your voice? There were tears in your eyes, when he went upstairs."

"I know. Isn't it ridiculous? I want him to do this—I admire him for it—and—and—it nearly breaks my heart to see him suffer under it," she burst out.

"That's just—woman, isn't it?" he smiled. "You would better have left him to me—in my world only ugliness can make us suffer."

"I like him better fighting ugliness."

"I suppose you do," with a sigh.

"The ugliness of Farwell will make you suffer, and fight, too, when it is finally registered on your senses."

"Are you threatening me?" he smiled.

"Farwell is beginning to creep up the hill to you—it is beginning to pull you down the hill to it—you can't be safe much longer—" she answered seriously.

He watched her go, with his amused smile.

## CHAPTER XIX

**T**HE three or four weeks that followed upon Dick's first day in the factory were, in all probability, the most important weeks of his life. In them he proved to himself that he could endure hardships and acute physical discomfort. He found that he could give up all the things which had hitherto made life worth living—and it was still worth living.

That he stuck it out was not due to any heroic sentiments. His young, half-baked enthusiasm had hurled him into a situation which was very uncomfortable, but his pride made him see the thing through. Patsy and Joan and Uncle Gregory must be made to respect him. That was really the thought that kept him at work. There were many days when it just barely sufficed, as a goad, but as time went on, and he began to adjust himself to his job, he grew more and more glad that he had a chance to make good.

As the weeks grew into months he found that the slight suspicion of his motives which the men had shown at first, melted into friendliness. They began to understand that he had not come among them as a spy, but as a comrade. Patsy managed to interpret him to them, in the beginning, and later he needed no go-between.

His initiation was a painful awakening to the grim realities for this undeveloped, care-free boy. He had

never known discomfort, nor an ungratified desire. Here he was suddenly transported into a world where discomfort was the a-b-c of living. He learned the terror of the man or woman of the unskilled class, of "losing the job." It was the ghost that haunted them. It was the king that ruled them. They endured anything rather than risk unemployment.

As time went on he made friends with some of the girls who worked in the shop. They were shy with him at first, but his straightforward friendliness won them in the end. He neither geyed them, nor courted them, as the other men did. He talked to them as if they were any women whom he might meet. He did not share Patsy's disdain of them, any more than he did the frankly expressed lust of the flesh, of the other men.

That it was all sordid, ugly and sickening, was his first feeling about Farwell—then came the real problem, the first one he had ever attacked—how to make it better.

Joan often came in and had lunch with him, in the big, empty factory hall. Thermos bottles and a charcoal stove had solved the problem of a nutritious, hot lunch, and it appeared daily. Sometimes, Patsy joined them, often one or two of the girls were asked to stay. They all considered it next in distinction to being entertained at the Hall. It was during these hours that Dick got his first-hand knowledge of things, and often the glimpse into the needs of the whole community would come through the inadvertent remark of one of these guests.

"It's sickening, the way they all take it for granted that when they're fourteen, they get shoved into this hole. From that time on they live in the terror



of getting shoved out!" Dick said to Joan, one day.

"Yes—it's too bad we can't put off their conscription until they are sixteen. Some places in the South, the working age is eight, Dick!"

"It makes you see red!"

"There's a growing sentiment about that—once the public gaze fastens on an abuse—it stops," Joan replied.

She found herself in the strange position of holding on with might and main to a force which she herself had set in motion. In her wildest dreams she had never hoped to see Dick at work in the factory. A year ago it would have seemed a triumph. Then there was in her mind a distinct line of cleavage. On one side was labour, with its needs and its abuses; on the other, capital, with its power and its greed. They were enemies, definitely lined up against each other. She had graduated during her college course, from the camp of those who believed that fight, and eventually industrial war, was the only solution of the difficulty, into the group of soberer thinkers who hoped to show that since the aim of capital and labour was the same—namely, production to the nth power, that a way could be found for them to work in amity.

But the months spent at Farwell Hall with these two delightful men, had somewhat blurred the issue. She detested Gregory's selfishness, but she had come to understand it. Dick's ignorance was too obvious to need mention. She lashed herself at the thought that the luxury of their living had influenced her judgment. She could not believe so ill of herself—but certain it was that she did not want to precipitate catastrophe into the lives of these two people, of whom she had grown so fond. So, she found herself holding Dick

back, urging him to go slow, to study things out before he acted. She pointed out to him that these conditions had always existed—that the poor had neither the strength nor the brains to find the way out for themselves—it must be done by those people who had brains and power.

"But I'm so ashamed of having them so scared of us! How can we get some self-respect into them?" cried the boy.

"Unionize 'em an' show 'em their power," said Patsy. "That's the only way ye can do it, Dick, an' ye wouldn't be for that, I suppose!"

"Why wouldn't I?" hotly.

"Well—yer uncle won't stand fer it."

"I'll stand for anything that means I'm dealing with men and women, and not with slaves of my industry."

"That's all right, Dick, when you come into power, you can tell the men you're willing they should organize, but now if Mr. Farwell objects to it, he's got the right to say so."

"Has he? I'm not so sure."

"Patsy and I both know that it takes a long time to bring things about with our people. You have to teach them how to do everything—most of all how to use power. It is because some of our leaders haven't learned, because they've just taken a leaf from the employers' book, that we've got labour and capital at a deadlock now."

"Well—how many years have we stood fer the employer's tyranny?" cried Patsy.

"How many years is he going to stand for ours?" Joan answered him.

"Till he rots!" Patsy retorted.

"Patsy—you're talking about Dick."

"I am not."

"Dick is the enemy. That's what I'm trying to say—there can't be a tyranny on either side, nor a deadlock—it's got to be co-operation, fairness, equal chance. That's the modern way."

"But there's no co-operation here," objected Dick.

"But Farwell isn't typical, Dick. It's just an example of the old system, an out of the way, unorganized survival. It thrives because of its age and the Farwell prestige, and because the estate is rich and can keep it advertised. In the big organized industries, like steel and iron workers, silk workers, even the higher grades of cotton cloth workers, no such conditions exist as there are here. You saw how the workers lived around those model factories—but they were higher grade than these workers here. Patsy saw that, didn't you? Why? Because they had been taught."

"Organize 'em an' they learn quick enough," Patsy remarked.

So they argued hour on hour, and Dick listened and learned from these two, who held his respect and his utmost devotion.

Gregory, true to his colours, asked no questions, made no comment on Dick's behaviour. If he was surprised that he stuck to the job, he never said so. The only visible effect of Dick's all day absence was that Gregory began to monopolize more of Joan's time than before. Nowadays they rode or tramped together, they read the same books and discussed them. Sometimes they argued about Dick and his future, but usually by mutual consent, they steered clear of waters of contention. They grew to understand and respect each other, and better still, to enjoy each other. Joan and Dick had

resumed their studies at night, and quite often Gregory took part in the discussions that arose between them.

He was not unaware that there was some danger in a man of his temperament and habits becoming so dependent upon a woman who lived under his roof. He kept his warning signals flying in his own mind. Right after Christmas he decided to betake himself South for a while and see what effect absence had upon his growing habit. He went reluctantly, and found himself annoyed at Joan's enthusiastic acceptance of his plan.

Joan took advantage of her new freedom to spend the greater part of her days in the village, renewing and strengthening her associations there. She tried to get the women waked up to new standards. She knew, as Dick and Patsy in their hot intolerance failed to know, that if Farwell factory hands were transferred over night into perfect cottages, with good wages, that the scale of living would be the same, because the women didn't know how to keep houses clean, children and men fed on decent fare, because they knew nothing at all of the judicious use of the family wage. So Joan set herself to the task of helping them to learn. She knew what enemies habit and ignorance were, and how long it took to conquer them. If she could hold back her pair of wild young horses until the groundwork of a new Farwell had been laid, then they might go ahead with some of their radical changes.

She soon came upon the discovery that Dick and Patsy were busy organizing the men and boys. The Cotton Cloth Workers' Union sent a delegate, who worked in secret with them, and the men, assured of Dick's approval, were responding enthusiastically. Joan challenged them with it, and they admitted it.

"But, Dick, you promised Mr. Farwell you would not make trouble—" she protested.

"I didn't know what I was saying. These men have got a right to organize and no promise of mine to Uncle Greg is going to stop them."

"It will mean a strike—"

"What if it does? The Company needs a strike."

"You must tell Mr. Farwell what you're doing."

"Not until it's done."

"It isn't fair, Dick—you've broken your word, and you ought to tell him."

"Look here—what side are you on, Uncle Greg's or mine?" he demanded.

Joan's heart stood still at the question.

"I don't want to win by broken promises and bad faith, whatever side I'm on," she answered.

"Very well—I'll tell him the day he comes home—" he answered her hotly.

As it turned out that retort committed him to nothing, for Gregory, finding how hard it was to stay away from home, forced himself to extend his visit, as a matter of discipline.

When his exile was over he went back to the Hall with the satisfaction of a flagellant, whose punishment is behind him.

"Have you and Dick missed me?" he demanded of Joan.

"Of course; we've been terribly busy," she added.

"Studies or village improvement?"

"Both."

She restrained any expression of her real pleasure at his return, because she knew that the revelation Dick was to make to him, must be laid at her door. She hated her own reluctance to be a party to distressing

him. He, on his part, misread her coolness and aloofness. He turned away with a regret that something fragrant and precious had gone from him.

Dick showed strain during dinner, and faced his duty the minute they reached the drawing room.

"Uncle Greg, the men at the factory have organized, and I've had a part in it," he began without preamble.

"What's that?" Gregory exclaimed.

"There was no other way for them to get anything done. Saunders is about as modern as Simon Legree—you won't pay any attention to them, so what could they do?"

"So that's what you've been up to in my absence," remarked Mr. Farwell, sweeping them both with the same glance.

"I know I promised you not to make trouble, but I think the right of those men to get some decencies is more important than my promise," Dick went on.

"Do you approve of this?" Gregory asked Joan.

"I don't approve of his breaking his promise to you—I do approve of the men unionizing," she answered directly.

"So I have a league against me, in my own house."

"Oh, Uncle Greg, if you'd only come down and see for yourself!"

"That will do. I don't intend to be lectured by any half-baked school boy, who has picked up a dozen ideas about social re-organization! I was willing to let you and Miss Babcock make this experiment under one condition—you agreed to it. Now you have seen fit to disregard that promise. I am still able to direct my own affairs, grateful as I am to you for your interest. Saunders will have orders to dismiss you tomorrow, Dick."

"You'd better not—it will mean trouble. I'm a good worker and a member of the union. You can't throw me out for no reason at all."

"Do I understand that you are threatening me, Dick?" Gregory inquired, ominously.

"I tell you, you'll get a strike, if you have me fired without a cause!" Dick cried excitedly.

Gregory laughed tolerantly. It was the last straw laid upon Dick's nerves.

"You can stand there and laugh about it! If you know what I know, you wouldn't laugh. I'd rather be Nero, than you. He was just a poor fool who didn't know what he was about—but you're a slacker. You won't play the game at all. There isn't a man in the works I don't respect more than I do you—playing up here with your doll rags while the men down there sweat. What kind of a man are you, anyhow?" Dick fairly screamed, hysterical with excitement.

Joan wanted to rush in between them, or to run away, where she could not hear, but she stood perfectly still and waited for Gregory to speak. She saw the slow fury mount his face. A quick motion of his hand swept a Chinese porcelain bowl onto the hearth with a crash. He spoke quietly.

"I cannot lose my temper over a hysterical child, Dick, but—"

"I can't stand you any longer—you make me—sick!" cried the boy and rushed out of the room. Presently they heard the outer door slam and swift feet on the gravel road. Joan stirred. She turned her tortured face to Gregory, with an instinct to defend Dick. She felt she faced another man—not the Gregory she knew. He deliberately refused to see the

appeal in her face. With his foot, he brushed aside the shattered bowl.

"There seems to be considerable wreckage here," he remarked coolly, and walked out of the room.



## CHAPTER XX

GREGORY sat in his study, with an open book before him nearly all night, without turning a leaf. He went over every stage of his life with Dick from the boy's childhood up to the present. He discovered that his love for him had been the central core of his heart for ten years. He had counted on Dick's love for him. But this strange young woman could walk into their lives and in six months arouse Dick against him, so that he called him Nero, and insulted him in every possible way.

It was not that the boy had attacked his motives and his way of living that affected him—he rated that as emotionalism, but it hurt deeply to have him slam the door, as it were, upon all those years of loving companionship. His fury at the woman who had brought this disaster upon them, grew with what it fed on.

What a fool he had been to let her have her way with the boy! He should have issued orders in the beginning, when he first learned her background and her principles, that she was not to proselyte Dick. In his hurt pride, he granted her no excuses. She had lived under his roof, won his friendship and betrayed him. He hated her. The memory of how she had been in his thoughts all during his absence from the Hall made his face burn. While he was dreaming of her, she was organizing a strike in his factory. She had said that Farwell was creeping up the hill toward him. . . .

Tomorrow he would have Dick dismissed. They should not intimidate him, those two. If the strike came, he would go to New York and let them fight it out, as he had on the last occasion when there was trouble. If Dick had thrown in his lot with the workers, he would have to take the consequences.

He built up a fine case against her. He even incriminated Miss Earl. She had been *particeps criminis* in that she had placed this revolutionary in his home. He would take occasion to call on Miss Earl and express himself on the matter.

Probably Joan was a member of some radical association, working for labour interests. They had a card index, no doubt, of all the rich factory owners in the country, and the conditions existing in their shops. Joan was probably called a "field missionary," and it was her job to spy out the situation, any way she could. He could fairly see her draw his name out of the filing cabinet—"Farwell, Gregory." "Ah, yes, I must try to get in with that man," she would say. She would go to this miserable Professional Woman's Bureau, and either pull the wool over poor Miss Earl's eyes, with the result that she is placed in Farwell Hall, or she flatly confesses her intentions to that estimable lady, who co-operates with her!

Once in his house, she had not scorned to use every means to win his interest and affection, as well as Dick's. She was versed in all the finest methods of attracting and hoodwinking him. Even he, seasoned man of the world, had not entirely withstood her wiles. How could an inexperienced boy, like Dick, be expected to stand out against her?

She had painted her picture in vivid hues, with the down-trodden labouring man as the hero, his employer,

as the villain. Ridiculous! Everybody knew that labour was the most autocratic organization on the earth! That it added to all the other abuses of power—ignorance in its use. Was she telling Dick that? Certainly not. She only played on his young intolerance of injustice. She had roused him to break his quixotic lance against his own class!

And he, fool that he was, had stood by, smiling at this tutelage, sure of Dick's lazy indifference. He had discounted sex. The girl had roused the youngster to a fierce knight-errantry. If this was her cause, it should be his, too.

"Fool! Fool!" Gregory said over and over to himself.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning, when Joan came in at the open door. She had not been to bed, either. She was dressed as she had been for dinner. She was white as a ghost, with dark rimmed eyes. He felt his heart instinctively clamp with pity for her, she looked so young and miserable. Then he steeled himself.

"I saw your light. I haven't been to bed, either. I must go away in the morning. I shall follow Dick."

He stood looking at her without reply.

"I thought perhaps we might tell each other what we were thinking, you down here, I upstairs——"

He stirred, impatiently, she thought, so she added humbly,

"Just as—as two people who have liked each other."

"I'm afraid I am not much in the mood for philosophical discussion," he replied coolly.

She turned at that, and walked toward the door. Something happened to his composure.

"You've made Dick hate me!" he burst out at her.

She came to him quickly and looked him in the eyes.

"No matter what you think of me, you *cannot* believe that I deliberately turned Dick against you!"

"Deliberately or not—it's happened."

"I can understand how you must feel about me. I don't blame you at all. I offer no defence—but mayn't I say I'm sorry?"

"No, you may not. I don't want your sympathy. I did want your loyalty, but I find I never had it."

"You've always had it. I warned you at the very first what I was, what I believed, what I would teach Dick, if I had the chance. You took the risk."

"But this treachery while I was gone——"

"It cannot change facts for me to say that I opposed the unionization—that I begged Dick and Patrick to wait until Dick was in command. In the beginning I was responsible for rousing Dick, I admit that. So far as the men in Farwell are concerned, now the organization is done, I must be glad. You can see that, can't you?"

"I can see that you have absolute dominion over Dick—you could have stopped it, if you had wanted to. You could have forced him to keep his promise."

"No, I couldn't. I wish I could make you understand how the whole situation has graduated out of my hands. I've been holding back wild horses, in your absence, waiting for you to come home, so I could ask your advice—but now—what's the use?"

"I told you you would start something you couldn't stop."

"Does it help any to say that?"

"What are you going to do, if there's a strike?"

"Help the men."

"I shall dismiss all your friends in the village and get

in new men from elsewhere. We won't have unions—So that's all you and Dick have accomplished for 'them.' ”

“No, that isn't all. Whether you keep them or send them—if we've roused them to organize and fight for human rights—they'll never be the same again.”

“None of us will ever be the same again,” he assured her.

“So be it,” she answered gravely.

“What do you intend to do with Dick?”

“Mr. Farwell, Dick went on his own when he took a job in the factory. I didn't suggest that, you know. Ever since I've tried to act as a brake on his enthusiasm. He and his friend, Patsy, are too young and too ardent for change to see that it must come slowly. I'm afraid that they've got to learn it through some bitter experience. I shall not stand sponsor for all Dick's mistakes!”

“You fired his imagination for these people——”

“I urged you to offer him an alternative!”

“You've made life unbearable for me!” he accused her.

“And you for me!”

He started at that.

“What?”

“You've clouded my clear-cut issue, you've made me hesitate and compromise with my duty, because of my sense of gratitude and loyalty to you. I've enjoyed your friendship, I've loved my life here. You've opened up all sorts of new interests and ideas to me—I've come to understand your attitude toward the world. I've handicapped myself at the very beginning with affection for you and Dick. Where does it take me? Nowhere! Why should I be loyal to you?”

Haven't I given you full value for your money? My loyalty belongs down there in Farwell—I warn you that when I go, I'm free—I shall fight you—" her voice rose in a climax of feeling.

"Very well. I shall give no quarter because of—any affection for you or for Dick," he replied quietly.

She felt his voice quiver at the mention of the boy's name.

"Come down to the village with me, and meet us half way, Gregory Farwell. You wouldn't fight us, if you understood," she cried to him, full of pity.

"No—I cannot be wheedled nor threatened. I am not concerned with the troubles of Farwell. I am custodian of the factory properties until Dick's majority—and I shall conduct them as they have always been conducted."

"You have modern machinery, not hand looms," she reminded him.

"You will forgive me, if I say our debates on this matter lead nowhere."

"May I say good-bye to you? I shall be gone before you breakfast."

She held out her hand to him, and after a second's hesitation he took it.

"Good-bye, Miss Babcock."

"I'll look after Dick every minute, if there's trouble. I can't say what you and Dick and the Hall have meant to me—" she broke off, and went out of the room hastily.

He lifted his head to call her back—then with a sigh he went to the window and raised the blinds. A cold February dawn was settling on the earth. Gregory shivered, with a presentiment of misfortune. What had gone awry in his world of beauty and aloofness?

Was it that human attachment had invaded his seclusion?

First Dick had crept in, with his happy boy ways—and then Joan. There was no use counting her out, she was there, inside his stronghold. In the midst of the turmoil of his thoughts and emotions, he was glad that she had said she had affection for him. He was comforted to think that he blockaded her judgment, as she did his. Verily, she spoke the truth, with her phrase, the “handicap of emotion.”

He knew that sleep was impossible. He got a greatcoat from the closet, and a cap. He chose a stout stick and let himself out into the cold early morning. He walked rapidly to get his blood to circulating. He tried not to think. Something about his interview with Joan had taken away all his pleasure in thinking of her as a designing spy, set upon him by the radicals he had invented. She slipped into his thoughts as a tired, white-faced girl, crying out upon him that he had crippled her.

He tramped for miles over the frozen roads, and through the bleak, bare woods. Every inch of the way was redolent with memories of hours spent with Dick and Joan, riding or motoring. It was too sardonic, that these two should be fighting him, as an enemy! Why, the entire town of Farwell, factories, workers and all, was not worth it!

He came back hours later, physically tired.

His footsteps fairly echoed through the empty hall as he went to his bedroom. Tomorrow he would be alone in this big house. He would not bear it—he would go to New York in the morning and forget the whole miserable business. No—he would not run away.

She had said Farwell was creeping up the hill—well—he would cram it back into its place and hold it there. They would find him no craven enemy, those two, because of his love for them!



## CHAPTER XXI

**J**OAN walked into the village in the early morning, carrying her bag. It was cold and dispiriting, with no sun and the mud on the roads thick. She was going into battle, as surely as she was going into Farwell. In the old days she would have been glad to fight with the workers for the things she believed right, but now, it was not the workers who occupied her thoughts, it was the man on the hill, who was deserted by those he loved, because he would not understand one of the great struggles of the modern world.

The memory of Dick's attack upon his uncle hurt her—dear, crazy Dick, what was she to do with this rapidly burning fuse she had laid? Where and how would the explosion come? How many would it destroy?

What ironic stage manager had lifted her from the little western town, set her down here in this eastern village, tied up her heart strings with the heart strings of these two men unknown to her a year before? It was so incredible, that it seemed as if it must be part of a deliberate plan!

There was the usual early morning clatter in the factory district. Slatternly women were banging about the breakfast pans, the children were already swarming in front of the shacks. Window shades were luxuries unknown to the district, so in the gas-lighted rooms beyond, the men made their frank toilets. Smells of

poor coffee and frying meat assaulted their nostrils. Joan shivered at the ugliness of life here. Animals were cleaner and more self-respecting. She imagined a whole new deal for the factory district of Farwell, all these old filthy shacks to be done away with. A half mile out of the ugly town lay the hills and valleys of that beautiful state. In her mind's eye, she saw great new, many-windowed factory buildings set in the nearest valley, with a spur of the railroad running out of it. The green carpet of grass and vegetation stretched off on all sides to rest the eyes lifted from the drudgery of the looms. On the hills all about were the workers' cottages, fresh, modern and pretty. They had little gardens about them, of vegetables and flowers. There was a schoolhouse, and a church or two, maybe.

This ideal spot she peopled with a revolutionized community—women who knew how to keep house, to keep children clean and decently clothed; men who were interested in their homes, liked to garden a bit, instead of spending every night at the saloon. Neat children, in a good school, learning to be self-respecting citizens. Her thoughts developed that ideal village as she went on to the Raffertys, hoping to find Dick.

The children were in all stages of undress, quarrelling over their garments. The confusion was disturbing, but not to Mrs. Rafferty who, clad in an old wrapper, was busy over the stove. She greeted Joan, with her habitual enthusiasm, and said that Dick was sleeping in the attic. Patsy had gone up to call him. Had Miss Babcock had her breakfast? If there was anything odd in Dick's arriving near midnight, asking for a bed, and Joan appearing at seven-thirty, it was no concern of hers. Patsy came down, said Dick had not

undressed at all, and suggested that Joan go up and see him.

So she climbed the ladder-like stairs up into Dick's retreat. There was no window—it was dark and stuffy. The only light came from the door at the top of the stairs. He was sitting on an old broken chair, his head in his hands, and did not look up until she spoke to him. Then he started to his feet, stumbled toward her, put his arms about her, his head bent down upon her little soft felt hat. She put her arms around him, and they stood so, in silence for several seconds.

"I was afraid you wouldn't come," he said at last.

"Not come, Dick?"

"I thought you might side with Uncle Greg."

"How could I, Dick?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"It was dreadful to hear you attack him——"

"I can't help it—I've kept my mouth shut as long as I could," sullenly.

"All right—we won't talk about it. We've neither of us had any sleep. We must make up our minds what we are going to do, now."

"Now?"

"We must find some place to live, on what money we have. I've got some savings, so even if you do lose your six dollars a week, we can manage."

"I hadn't thought of that."

She smiled, he was such a baby. She took the broken chair and he sat on the floor before her and they went over the situation. She would get board and room, outside the district, in the town proper. He might buy a cot and blankets and stay with the Raffertys, if they would take him.

"They'll take me—they're the best friends I ever

had—always stand by and no questions asked. But I'm sure I'll get my allowance, Joan, and I've got some money in the bank."

So the first step was decided on, and they descended to the family circle with their proposition, which was at once accepted. Dick could have his cot in the parlour, and welcome.

"Patsy, what will happen, if Dick loses his job?" Joan asked.

"I dunno——"

"Are you planning a strike soon?"

"I ain't plannin' nuthin'," he teased her.

"I wish you could get them to begin easy—make demands that could be granted without making Mr. Farwell *seem* to give in."

"Well, they won't. We've had all the givin' in we want," he replied.

Joan could not get anything more out of him, as to the Union's program. So she started off to look for an abiding place.

"Do go slow, boys," she begged them.

The whistle blew and the two boys went to their work. Nothing happened. Dick began to breathe more easily—maybe Uncle Greg had changed his mind. He was glad to escape the crisis, because he hated to remember how the older man looked, when he had blazed out at him. He didn't want to hurt him—he didn't want trouble with him—but—

Larsen sauntered over to him.

"Saunders wants ye," he remarked.

It had come. Dick handed over his machine to a substitute and walked out of the shop, into Saunders' office. That dignitary looked up.

"Wages up to this morning, Norton. We don't need you here any longer."

"Why not? Don't I do the work all right?"

"Get out!" thundered Saunders.

"I hope you'll be here when I come to run the factory," said Dick sweetly.

Saunders looked up and laughed, a sneering sound of derision at a child. Dick never knew what happened, only his fist landed in Saunders' face, Saunders came at him, and they had at each other. A long time afterward, as it seemed to him, Larsen came to help the manager, and Dick landed out on the gravel walk, groggy and bleeding at the nose. He sat still for a little, getting his thoughts sorted out, and then betook himself to Mrs. Rafferty's for cold water and first aid.

"Fer the love av Mike, phwat happened to ye?" she demanded.

"I went at Saunders—" he began.

"Saunders, is ut? Well—put yer nose in this," she ordered, offering a tin basin of water. She got the whole story as the boy remembered it.

"There's no more justice round here, than there is in a jail," he exclaimed. "He had no right to throw me out. I was doing my work."

"Sure Saunders don't care 'bout no rights."

"Well—we'll show *him*!" said Dick.

"Darlin'—they'll git us ivry toime. They can starve us," the old Irish woman said with finality.

Dick sat by the window, his hands working nervously, looking out, saying nothing for hours, until the whistle blew. Then he went out and over to the lot, where the workers crossed from the factory to the

town. He got an old box which he placed carefully, and when the procession began to come along, calling out to him and chaffing him, he stopped them, asked them to wait a minute. Patsy appeared, serious-eyed and called out to him,

"What happened, Dick?"

"He threw me out—he and Larsen together, but I smashed him one in the nose before they got me."

"Look here, fellows, you all know Dick—how he took a job along wit' de rest av us to foind out phwat we need an' all, in the shops. Ye know he's a noice fella—no soide—jest wan av us. Ye know how he tould us, 'Go ahead with the unions, it's the only self-respectin' way fer the workin' man'—ye know that, don't ye?"

"Sure, we know ut!" came the answer.

"He's goin' to be the boss here some day, an' he ackchully wants us to live decent an' git some pleasure out o' loife."

"Good fer Dick!"

"Ye all know King Farwell——"

"Aw——" came the rumble of anger.

"Well, he's sore on this union job an' he's afther Dick——"

"To hell wit' *him!*" shouted a voice.

"No—look here a minute, fellows," Dick began. The crowd by this time had grown to full size. Practically all the workers were in the field surrounding him. He got up on his box and faced them. Joan sighted him afar and hurried to the edge of the crowd.

"I know you hate my uncle, because you think he's responsible for things down here—but he isn't. He don't know anything about how things are in the town—he leaves it to Saunders——"

"That's enuff against him!"

"He can't get interested in the factory. I don't blame him—he's all right. You'd like him, if you knew him—"

"Yes—we would! Say, Dick, quit yer kiddin'!" they hooted.

"Saunders don't believe in unions, so he makes Uncle Greg think they're the limit."

"Does Saunders have to tell him what he thinks, the poor nut?"

"Never mind about him. He's just running this factory until I'm of age. I inherit it from my grandfather, and I can do what I want with it, then, but Uncle Greg and Saunders don't want me to butt in now."

"Ye bet they don't."

"When I took the job, I promised I wouldn't stir up trouble down here, but I didn't keep my word——"

"Good fer you!"

"No—I'm sorry I couldn't, but I thought it was your duty to organize, so I helped you do it. Uncle Greg was furious and he ordered Saunders to dismiss me."

"We'll make him take ye back!" came the answer.

"He'll take ye back or we'll pull off a strike," cried Patsy.

"Sure! That's the idea!"

They took it up with shouts. The women and children were all hurrying from the shanties to join the crowd.

"Let Patsy an' two other fellas wait an' see Saunders as soon as the whistle blows, an' tell him our say," cried a man.

They greeted the idea with applause. The committee was appointed then and there.

"We want a representation on that committee," shouted a girl.

There was laughter at that.

"Sure, give the gurls a chanct. They got a union, too, ain't they?"

"Well, we can run the factory without ye—ye better look out fer us—"

"That's right—votes fer wimmen!" jeered the men good-naturedly. A girl was added to the commission, and they were about to go to their dinners when Dick made another speech, brief, but earnest.

"I can't tell you how I appreciate your standing by me like this. I hope I can stand by you all, some day!" he said, with feeling.

"Three times three for Dick—the Union employer!" called Patsy. They gave it with a will, hats were flung up, hands were shaken. Joan watched it with foreboding. How often had she seen the holiday spirit seize upon a crowd, when strike was called. It meant change, something doing. No wonder they welcomed it. But in her mind's eye were the later days, when faces grew pinched, women bitter and men anxious. How futile to have thought that that curly-headed, excited lad out there could help with this problem! Where was he leading them—these childlike victims of our system? No vision, no plan, no foresight for them—just one blundering step at a time. . . . And she was responsible for the whole situation here. She went away without seeing Dick and Patsy.

At one o'clock the workers were at their machines. At one fifteen, the committee went into Saunders' office. At one twenty-five, at a signal agreed upon, the ma-



chines all stopped—the workers walked out. In the dooryard the committee waited.

“He won’t even listen to us,” Patsy explained to them. “We told him the Union wouldn’t stand havin’ its members dismissed without cause. He laughed at us. Said he hadn’t heard we had a union. The Company did not recognize it, if we had. It’s up to us now—we’ve called a strike!”

## CHAPTER XXII

**T**HE workers got in touch with the union headquarters in a near by city by telephone, and two hours after the strike was called, a union strike manager was on the way to Farwell. The men loafed about, talking and smoking. Grady's saloon was headquarters, as usual. The women wandered around aimlessly, gossiping together. Everywhere was felt the sudden let-down that inaugurates a strike.

Jergens had dashed into town half an hour after the shut down, and carried Saunders off to the Hall. Joan and Dick saw the car with the manager.

"Poor Uncle Greg, he's got to think about us, now," remarked Dick.

She made no answer.

"Patsy says they'll bring in scabs," he continued.

"Probably."

"And some of these fellows have worked for us for five years—" bitterly.

"It's all useless—it could be compromised," she sighed.

"Fat lot of compromising to be expected from that old crab Saunders!"

Meanwhile, Saunders retailed the story of Dick's dismissal to Mr. Farwell.

"But why did he hit you?" Mr. Farwell interrupted.

"He asked me wasn't he doin' his work all right, an' I told him to git out. With that he flung hisself on me like a tiger, hittin' an' scratchin'."

"And how was he doing his work, Saunders?" Gregory inquired with interest.

"He was doin' all right—no complaint from the foreman."

Gregory sighed.

"It was because he was thrown out without any excuse that they called this strike?"

"Yes—sir."

"Saunders, considering the fact that my guardianship of Dick's property has been the most exhausting and tiresome responsibility of my life, does it strike you as rather humorous that Dick leads a strike of his own workmen against his own business?"

Mr. Farwell always terrified Saunders. He never could make him out.

"I don't see anything funny about this here fight. Of course we ain't recognized the unions, but I guess they're purty well organized this time, thanks to your nephew and that devil Rafferty."

"We can't run with women, plus a few extras from outside?"

"The wimmen are in ut. They got a union."

"Have they? I suppose they would have with Dick as leader. Dick seems to be much more able than I suspected. Well, what's to be done, Saunders?"

"Shut down, or get a carload of strike breakers like we done before, an' show 'em we mean business."

"That means trouble and broken heads," protested Mr. Farwell.

"That's the only way ye can handle 'em. I know 'em. Give 'em an inch an' they take a mile."

"My nephew and Miss Babcock tell me the conditions in the place are scandalous."

"They ain't so good, an' they ain't so bad," replied Saunders. "I've seen worse."

"If you took Dick back would they go to work?"

"I dunno. I guess they're lookin' fer trouble."

"What would they want, if we met them half way?"

"Lord only knows. A raise will come first—we'll get that anyhow, now they're organized—they'll want us to recognize the union—they may want new factories entirely—ye never can tell."

"You think we'd better fight them?"

"I do."

"I hope you are saving enough to retire on when my nephew comes of age, Saunders," remarked Mr. Farwell.

"I am," replied the dour one, with a grin.

"The cottages, I suppose, are not models?"

"Not exactly. They're purty bad, I guess. Rotten plumbin' an' leakin' roofs, they say—an'—"

"No details, Saunders. My nephew will undoubtedly rebuild them."

"They could be patched up all right——"

"You don't believe in model cottages?"

"What's the use? They'll abuse 'em just the same. Ye ain't got no model tenants for yer model cottages."

"You worked your way up out of that group, didn't you, Saunders?"

"I did, an' I know 'em. No brains, an' they won't learn."

"It might cause considerable inconvenience to all of us, Saunders, if they suddenly discovered brains, and began to learn.. Beginning to learn is the trouble. That is what has happened to my nephew. That is the reason of all this disturbance. It almost makes you believe in complete ignorance, Saunders."

The manager stirred uneasily, and made an effort to get back to facts.

"Ye don't want me to give in to 'em, do ye?"

"I don't care what you do, so long as I do not have to decide it. I employ you to run those hateful factories, Saunders."

"There'll be no givin' in, if ye leave it to me. I'll stand for no unions, neither. The minute ye give 'em the right to shoot off their gab on this an' that, ye've got trouble."

"Gab certainly seems responsible for a great deal, I admit. I don't intend to take part in this affair, so I may as well leave it to you. I'd like to be sure that no harm would come to my nephew and Miss Babcock—" he ended anxiously.

"Send 'em word to keep out of the fight, Mr. Farwell. Strike-breakers ain't no respecters of persons," Saunders advised, rising to go.

"I'm afraid they would scorn my advice, Saunders. I'm sorry you've got this trouble on your hands. By the way, no shooting, Saunders," he said in farewell.

The six o'clock train began to bring in men with camp outfits. Later trains added to the number. By nine o'clock a tent village was growing on the lots around the factory.

"Scabs are coming," the news ran through the district. A crowd began to collect on the edge of the field, watching the proceedings, and hooting at them. There were some big plug-uglies on guard, while the tent men worked, and they preserved a sullen silence in the face of all insults. The crowd was good-natured enough—it offered no violence. By midnight the tent city was ready. Cots, blankets and the commissariat department would follow in the morning. This whole

show had been performed for the workers' benefit, the last time there had been trouble. On that occasion the Company had won. It had been a nasty business, the attempt to dislodge the scabs, who were drilled and organized. There was hunger to contend with, too. None of them liked to remember it.

"They'll try to get thim in before mornin', byes. Let's be at the station a-waitin' fer 'em," called Patsy, when the tent raisers had finished work.

So they all started through the town, and surrounded the railroad station, good-naturedly chaffing and guying. There were men and girls both. Patsy and Dick were in the forefront of the crowd and Joan followed with Mrs. Rafferty, who came for the fun of it. Nearly the whole factory district was there.

It was very chilly in the early morning; the light from the old acetylene gas lamps threw grotesque shadows on the crowd. They stamped their feet and clapped their hands to keep warm. The town policeman came to inspect them, and had an ovation. They cheered him, and begged him to be ready to arrest them, in case of trouble. They all knew "the old Cop" as they called him, and as a representative of law, he had not much weight. He shook his billy at them and hurried off to telephone the Mayor.

That dignitary was in bed, sound asleep, but old Cop's news aroused him. He got out of his bed and appeared shortly at the station, with the entire police force, consisting of three elderly policemen. Card was rapturously received, but when he attempted to harangue the crowd, urging law and order, and recalling the experiences of the last strike, they interrupted him with cat calls and derision. They knew him for their enemy, and his assurances of friendly protection

in return for order, were valued at their true worth. They knew Card would never forget their opposition in the late election. Ben Card went away, black with rage, and hurried from house to house to arouse and swear in special police. He managed to commandeer eight men, with great effort. He ordered them all to the station at once, armed.

The crowd was dancing and singing in a vain attempt to keep warm, when the 3 o'clock train brought in twenty men under protection. The guards jostled the crowd to open up a way for their men. The crowd began to push and close in on them, meantime yelling "Scab!" at the strike breakers. Just at this juncture, Ben Card and the new deputies arrived on the run. They waited to ask no questions. They plunged in, revolvers drawn, ordering the crowd back.

"Keep your shirt on, Ben," some one called good-naturedly.

It might have been all right if an excited new policeman hadn't been roughly shoved by some one in the crowd. He thought he was attacked and he shot his revolver full into the mass. The bullet struck the leg of the big guard, trying to beat a way through for the scabs, and he went down with a howl. That set tempers afire.

Men began to slug—women, crushed in the midst of the mob, began to scream, and try to fight their way out. Ben Card urged his men to use clubs. He threatened to shoot if the crowd did not obey orders. In the midst of it a train unloaded another delegation, this time much larger. They saw the situation and tried to make a detour, and head for the tent city, but the strikers caught the idea and went after them, too.

The first company joined the second, taking advan-

tage of the lull. The scab leaders had had orders not to give fight, if they could avoid it, so they ordered the men to set out on a run, the insurgents in hot pursuit. Joan and Dick and Patsy were an integral part of the mob now. Hot, blood-thirsty and furious, they ran, throwing rocks or anything they could lay hands to. Card was knocked out with some missile and had to be carried home.

Arrived at the vacant lot where they were to camp, the scabs stood and gave battle. Most of the strikers had some sort of weapons now. There was shouting and yelling—there were grunts and howls of pain. The special police shot once or twice, but no one was hit, thanks to their bad aim. The grey dawn showed bloody faces, streaming hair, torn clothes. . . .

Most of the tent guards had been called in to help, so Dick and Patsy slipped about cutting the ropes of the tents where they could. It gave Dick an idea.

"Look here—let's get into the factory and break the machines so the scabs can't use 'em."

"But they're your machines," protested Patsy.

"I don't care if they are—I want 'em broken!" cried Dick. "Come on—now's the time—they're all mixed up in the fight and Card is out of it."

"All right—I know where Larsen keeps the tools—if we can get inside— Sneak round the shanties to the other door."

They started running. Joan saw them and followed. She caught up, as they reached the far side of the factory.

"It's Joan, boys, what's up?" she called as they turned on her.

"Going to smash the machines," replied Dick.



"Dick—they'll shoot you if they catch you. Card is ready to do anything—"

"Let him. He's out of it, for now. Here, Pat, kick in this cellar window," he ordered. "You stay here and give us a warning, if they come, Joan."

"Oh, Patsy—don't let him do it—" she begged.

"I can't stop 'im!" said the Irishman, disappearing into the blackness within, followed by Dick. They knew their way about, so they ran for the tools. At the door of the closet, Dick whispered.

"Pat, look! Wasn't that a flashlight?" The Irishman stared in the direction indicated.

"I saw nuthin'."

"I was sure," Dick said.

"Must 'a been the loight outside a-flickerin'—"

"Maybe—go ahead—hand out the tools."

They ran toward the biggest machine. Patsy knew the mechanism best, so he gave orders as to which part to attack, and how to disable it most completely in the shortest time. There was absolute silence in the great, dark place, save for their panting breath.

As Dick worked, he remembered his first impression of big elephants, tended by men. Would they perhaps turn upon their servants, who were daring to disable them. He looked about in swift apprehension. If they should close in upon Patsy and himself—if they should destroy their traitorous keepers. . . .

Joan waited what seemed to her ages, then she heard blows inside and the crash of things falling. Off in the field the fighting and shouting kept up. The sounds inside ceased, but the boys did not come out. She waited and waited—then she began to call softly. Finally she could bear it no longer. She climbed

through the broken window and began to clutch her way toward the direction of the stairs.

She groped up, and into the main room of the factory. A single gas lamp out in front, threw a wavering shaft of light across the place. The two boys were busy, apparently trying to unscrew some part of a machine. They worked feverishly and in silence.

Before she could speak, out of the shadows behind them a figure sprang upon Dick's back. The impact bore him to the ground. Patsy went down on the writhing mass, and managed to get the assailant's revolver.

Joan never hesitated. She had told Gregory that she would look after Dick. Suddenly a piece of the dismantled machine appeared in her hand—she did not know how. She ran to the panting group and waited. Patsy was trying to pull the man off Dick. When the right head came up in the scrimmage, she hit it. The man fell on Dick, inertly. Patsy, who was hammering at him, drew back. Joan helped him pull the man off and Dick got up. They all peered at the motionless man.

"Good God—it's Saunders!" said Dick.

"Did I kill him?" Joan asked.

Patsy laid his ear to his heart.

"No—we'd better get out of this."

"Get back to the crowd," Joan urged.

They ran swiftly down the stairs and out.

"Make fer the shanties!" panted Patsy.

"Oh—I hope I didn't kill him!" groaned Joan, as they ran.

## CHAPTER XXIII

FROM the moment when scabs were brought into Farwell, events began to unroll like a huge ball of twine, darting here and there without direction, tangling itself as it went faster. The morning after the strike breakers arrived, an anonymous scrawl urged Ben Card to search the factory. Saunders was found, delirious, from a concussion of the brain. The damage done the machines was not very important, but it showed that the strikers had been at the work of destruction when Saunders came upon them. He could probably tell who the offenders were when he recovered sufficiently to speak. For the present he was of no value as a witness. There was no suspicion as to his assailants, because in the confusion of the night before, nobody could be accounted for. He was taken to his home, and word sent to Mr. Farwell.

Larsen had orders from the Hall to assume command, to put the new men to work, and to withstand any attack from the strikers. He was told also to send for machinists to mend the broken property and he was to guard the shops from now on.

The boys congratulated themselves upon the success of their efforts, as well as their get-away. But they had some difficulty with Joan.

"If Saunders dies, you know, they can get me for murder," she remarked.

"But they won't get you—there's no evidence.

How would they ever think of your being there, to say nothing of busting old Saunders' coco?" Dick protested.

"They have ways of finding these things out," she replied.

"But you aren't even a stroiker!" Patsy said.

"Isn't she, though? Didn't you see her land on Saunders?" questioned Dick, laughing.

"Oh, Dick, don't *joke* about it!"

"All right, but for Heaven's sake, don't work up any conscience about it. Would you rather I had concussion of the brain, than Saunders?"

"Don't be silly."

"If you hadn't cracked him, I would be dead. It was great! It was worth my close shave, just to see you do it, Joan," he said admiringly.

"If he only won't die!"

"If he only won't get well and squeal on us!" interrupted Patsy. "That's all I'm worryin' over. He saw us, all roight, an' he knew us. He's got no special love for me an' Dick."

"That's true," sighed Joan.

"I'd rather he'd croak than git his sinses back," Patsy remarked.

"Cut it out—don't even think about it. We don't know anything about the business," Dick said.

"By the way, who hit Ben Card?" inquired Joan.

"Ain't it funny, the way wimmen has got to know names an' dates?"

"I've got an alibi—I didn't even know he was out of the running," Dick said.

"I may be wrong, but I seem to remimber a big loomp of clay jumpin' up into my fist an' remarkin'—  
'How I would loike to hit the respected Mayor av this

town on the nut!' and shortly after that I saw the thing land, an' Card took out time!"

They all laughed at him, ending that discussion.

Patsy and Dick tried to get the men to organize some sort of ordered resistance, to be ready at the time the strike breakers were marched to the factory, but it could not be done. The mob spirit was loose, and they could not be made to obey orders. They busily piled up a supply of rocks, old vegetables and other missiles, but they had no interest in Dick's idea of forming companies and attacking in relays.

Joan tried her hand with the women.

"We can't beat them with force, because they are drilled and ready for us. We've got to use brains. Let the men do the fighting at the factory, but we must find a way to work in the tent town. If we could damage the food supply there, or cut the tent guy ropes, it would do more good than getting our heads broken in a scrap," she said to them.

They listened to her, and the result was scouting parties of women to watch the station for incoming supplies for the camp, to patrol the tent colony looking for a chance to dump bags of dirt, which they carried, into the food, and to generally conduct a destructive campaign.

When the strike breakers started for the factory under a guard of huskies, augmented by Card's special police, the men were ready for them, armed with clubs, and anything else they could carry. They had thrown up a rough sort of protection across one end of the factory door yard, behind which they could stand and throw missiles. The guard started them on the double quick, the strikers keeping pace.

"What's yer hurry, scabbies?" cried Patsy. As they

approached the factory building, the scabs saw the reserves all ready for them behind the redoubts. They increased their pace to a run. The air was suddenly full of bricks, rocks, eggs and other offensive foreign matter. Hisses and hoots, cat-calls, groans greeted them. The accompanying gang of rioters ran ahead and made a stand before the door, barring entrance for one second, until the Guard closed in, hitting right and left with clubs, and threatening to shoot.

In the end the scabs got in, but not without several wounded. Almost all the windows on the front of the building were broken, during the battle.

"We'll get them when they come out, boys," cried Dick, excitedly.

While the men were engaged in this battle royal at the door, two girls, appointed by the women at a suggestion from Joan, managed to get inside, through the window broken the night before. They found their way to the wash rooms and various water taps which they turned on. With long poles they shattered the globes of the arc lights in the work rooms. As the guards ran back at the sound of the smashing glass, the girls were on their way out, by the route they had come. As they stepped out of the basement window, however, the sentinel marching at back, captured them, and they were marched off to jail. This was the first arrest, and when the women heard of the fate of their members, they bragged to the men of it.

"You stood and threw a few rocks, but we do something that counts, and get arrested," they boasted.

"Shure—we couldn't run this strike fer a minute without yez!" Patsy blarneyed them.

Dick was a sad looking object after the scrap at the door, with a cut in his head from a guard's club, which

stained his hair and constantly trickled blood down his forehead. He was perfectly unconscious of it. His face was black with dirt, his shirt was torn, but he was having a good time. Boy-like, he loved a fight. For the first time since he had come into the factory district, he felt that his friends were doing something to get their rights.

Ben Card's police lined up in front of the factory. The men remained long enough to express their opinion of them, and then withdrew to make some plans for the next move; and to count their wounded.

Patsy led Dick off to have his cut looked after by Mrs. Rafferty. Dick protested like a drunken man, at being taken away from the council. He wanted to be in on the next fight. But Patsy had his way. As they crossed the lot, they met Joan, and she took command of Dick, releasing Patsy, who went back to the men.

"We'll go to the village doctor, Dick. It might get infected—"

"It's nothing—just a scratch. Mrs. Rafferty can fix me up."

"You'll go to the doctor, just the same," she said, quietly, her hand on his arm. "Does it hurt?" He shook his head. "My—you are a sight!" she added.

"It was some fight, Joan—you ought to have been there."

"I've seen enough fights. They get you nowhere."

"What?"

"We've had two already, a dozen men are cut up with the clubs the guards used, one man is shot and the scabs are established in the factory. What good has it done?"

"We aren't through with them, yet!"

"We can't beat them unless we organize the fight and use our brains. This mob business never gets anywhere."

Before he could reply, a shout caught their attention. The car from the Hall, driven by Jergens, with Mr. Farwell on the front seat beside him, appeared, followed by a hooting rabble of women, who ran beside it, calling out insults, and occasionally throwing a rock.

Mr. Farwell paid no least attention to the attending furies. He looked ahead, unconcerned.

"It's Uncle Greg!" exclaimed Dick.

Just then, Gregory caught sight of the boy's ghastly, blood-stained face, and he ordered Jergens to stop.

"Dick!" called Mr. Farwell, "what has happened to the boy, Joan?"

The crowd closed in about the car; the men sighting the excitement from afar, began to run toward it. The clamour of the women increased, as they shut the car in a ring.

"He must not stop here—they'll mob him," cried Joan, trying to beat her way through to the machine.

"Get out of the way there, you!" cried Gregory, authoritatively. "Can't you see my nephew is hurt? Get in the car, Dick, and we'll go for a doctor."

"Oh, his precious little Dickie! We can rot down here in his old shanties, but don't let anything happen to his Dickie!" jeered a woman.

"It's King Farwell! He's come to pay us a visit at last," cried another.

"Ye would run in scabs on us, would ye? Well, we'll show you before we're done with you!" shouted one of the men, throwing a rock which struck the motor and glanced off.

"I don't intend to discuss my business with you, now,



or at any time. If you don't like the way I manage it, get out. I intend to run it exactly as I see fit, and on terms which are agreeable to me. If you won't do the work there, I'll hire men who will. There is still a law in this state which protects private property, there is still a state's prison penalty for property's destruction. That's all I have to say. Now get out of the way and let my nephew get into this car."

He stood up facing them all, a target for attack, but nobody moved to touch him. The silence lasted only a second.

"That's all ye got to say, is it? Well then, ye can listen to us. It's about time there was an end to you an' your kind. We ain't no Russian serfs, ye know—"

An angry murmur rose, and another rock flew straight at Gregory. It missed him but he never flinched to avoid it.

"Come on, Dick," cried Joan. "Let us through—let us in there," she repeated, beating people aside, pushing and pulling.

"Stand away from this car or I'll charge into the crowd!" shouted Gregory.

Dick at Joan's side, stopped.

"Come on, Dick—we've got to get to him—"

"Not after that," said the boy bitterly.

Joan went on alone and finally sprang to the running board. She had no idea what she would say to them, only she knew they must not attack Gregory. As she turned to look into their angry faces, she felt a great despair for them. How stupid they were—running like mad dogs in the pack! Her eye caught a string of wagons coming from the railroad station. She took a chance on it.

"Don't waste your time on this man—he's just one

individual. It's the system we want to change. There go the supply wagons with food for the scabs. There's your work for you!" she cried.

They answered with a shout and charged in the direction of the wagons, as if impelled by one instinct. Dick ran with them.

Gregory looked at her earnestly.

"I am, I suppose, obliged to you, Miss Babcock. It is a trifle embarrassing to owe protection to a woman."

"It's stupid of you to defy them now," she said hotly. "They'll kill you without a thought."

"As they did poor Saunders—"

"He isn't dead!" she cried.

"Very near it, poor soul. I've just come from there. He's got about one chance in fifty." The acute distress in her face struck him. She was as sensitive to the ugliness of this fight as he was. It sickened him to think of her as part of it. "How was Dick hurt?"

"In the fight at the factory. It isn't serious."

"Will you get him to a doctor?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. I suppose things will be worse before they're better down here?"

"I should think so. The men are crazy mad at the scabs."

"I don't intend to submit to this fighting and destruction of property."

She made no answer. She stepped off the running board, and faced him.

"Don't come down here again until this is settled," she said earnestly.

"My dear Miss Babcock," he smiled, "I really cannot let your short-tempered friends interfere with my

personal liberty. Look after Dick—and can't you keep out of it yourself?" he appealed.

She shook her head.

"All right, Jergens—back to the Hall," he said, bowing to her, with grave courtesy. She watched the car until it was safely away—and he, in turn, looked back at the girl, with an overpowering longing to go back and snatch her up into safety—to carry her away out of this sordid, stupid fight. Surely there were finer uses to which her powers might be devoted. He thought of that rabble, and shuddered.

## CHAPTER XXIV

**J**OAN succeeded in getting Dick to a doctor who plastered up his cuts, and then, on his promise that he and Patsy were going to turn in and sleep until noon, she went to her room to try for some rest herself. The strain of their all night fight, her terror lest she had killed Saunders, and last and most important, her anxiety over Gregory's defiance of the mob—had left her a nervous wreck. She wanted to hide herself away and cry.

But when she threw herself down on her bed, she found herself unable to relax a muscle. She had only an hour or so, because she must be on hand when the strikers made the next move. She felt herself as responsible for Dick's safety, as if he were her own child. Gregory had charged her to look after the boy, and she felt that this was the only way she could make up to him, for the havoc she had wrought in his life.

She knew that she must not allow herself to think about Gregory now. She must keep her thoughts free of him. She began to vaguely realize that he hampered her judgment—not Gregory, the employer and capitalist—she utterly disapproved of him—but Gregory the man, Gregory, the friend. She despised herself for being proud of the way he had stood up, in the face of that mob, and defied them. He was so perfectly true to his own principles.

She tried to hold her mind upon the women's part in the strike. She wanted to work out a way to make them effective, but it was hard to know how to manage

them. She tried to foresee the things that might happen to Dick and Patsy, so that she could be ready for anything, but her unruly, ever active mind continually ran away from her, away from the ugly, brutal fight, up the hill to find peace and refreshment with Gregory.

Finally she gave up the idea of rest, and sat down at her table, which served as writing desk, and began a letter to Miss Earl, in the hope that she could get away from herself—

“If either one of us could have foreseen the events that were to follow upon my chance visit to your office on that fateful day last spring, I wonder if we would have had the courage to face them? My taking the position at Farwell Hall was such a joke to both of us, at that time. But oh, my dear Miss Earl, it has not turned out to be a joke at all!

“Some day I hope we may have a long talk together, so that I may explain to you all the many elements which went to make up the situation which led to the crisis I find myself in today. I wrote you that I was interesting young Norton in the study of social conditions—that I was deliberately trying to waken him to the responsibilities he has to assume at 21, as owner of these factories in Farwell. I seem to remember writing you jocosely about it, threatening to make a good socialist of him. I was so sure of myself, Miss Earl, so damnably sure. How sardonic it is that we little mortals go on thinking that *our* rule of thumb will make all the wrongs right! We go ruthlessly smashing into other people’s lives, forcing our point of view upon them, demanding our own way . . .

“Dear Miss Earl, my young pupil ran ahead of his teacher. He took a job in his own factory to study the

conditions. He urged the organization of the men and women into unions. Mr. Farwell had him dismissed as a trouble-maker—the union called a strike.

"All night we have been in a terrible fight with policemen and strike breakers. I suppose you can't even picture it, hand to hand fighting, scratching, throwing rocks, running with the pack. I fought beside Dick; he was cut in the head. Once he was attacked and I nearly killed the man who assaulted him. Just now we have a lull—but later no one knows what may happen. The workers have been patient for many years, but now they are thoroughly aroused.

"That spring day in your office laid the fuse to all this, Miss Earl!"

She sealed it and posted it on her way to the Raffertys'. She felt better for having written it. Mrs. Rafferty was on guard, trying to keep the house quiet so the boys could sleep. She beckoned Joan into the kitchen.

"Slapin' loike babies," she whispered to the girl. "Ye don't look anny too rested yersilf," she added.

"I couldn't sleep. Oh, Mrs. Rafferty, I wish we were out of this! It's all my doing that Dick ever went to work in the shops."

"Joan," said the elder woman, laying her big, kind, red hand on the girl's arm, "what is, is. It don't do no good to wisht the past differunt. Dick moight be in worse business than stroikin'!"

"But I don't want those two boys to be hurt, and I know the minute Card gets out, he'll lay for them."

"Let Card look out fer himsilf, then. My Patsy can take care of hissilf, an' a broken head won't kill Dick," she replied cheerfully.

"What's the matter with me, anyhow, Mrs. Rafferty? I know this strike is right. I know it's time the workers demanded better conditions, and yet my heart isn't in it at all."

"Well, ye're toired out fer wan thing. Don't get to thinkin' ye started this foight, my gurl. 'Tis due this long toime, an' it would a' come, with er without you an' Dick."

"You are a comfort, dear Mrs. Rafferty."

"The byes is tellin' me King Farwell had the nerve to come a showin' hissilf in the village," the Irish woman continued.

Joan nodded.

"I'm sorry they didn't smash a cabbage in his smilin' face," she remarked hotly.

"Mr. Farwell thinks his way is right," Joan defended him feebly.

"Does he now? I'd loike a few words with him. I'd give him my opinion on the way he does in the factory, the great big hog!"

Joan had never seen her friend angry before, but she was aroused this time. Gregory Farwell typified to her all the greed and injustice in the world, just as "The Company" had been the composite devil of Joan's childhood in Whiting. She tried to recapture her old hatred for those men. Were they, too, kindly human beings, with families and friendly human relations, as Gregory was? Were they, perhaps, as much a part of the system, as the men and women they employed? Was it unthinkable that they should come to extend these human relations to the men who worked for them, so that they might work *with* them?

Mrs. Rafferty's list of the things she would tell King Farwell brought Joan back from her far flight.

Maybe Mrs. Rafferty was right—perhaps forcing Gregory and his kind to do the just and fair thing, was the only way.

"Do you believe the workers would be fair, Mrs. Rafferty, if we had the power?"

"I do not. No human bein's with power is goin' to be fair, unless they're forced to it," was her instant answer.

Dick came into the room, fairly staggering with sleep.

"Hello," he said. "Isn't Patsy awake yet?"

"No. Did yez slape, bye?"

"Like a log. Did you, Joan?"

"No."

He came over and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Look here, old dear, you'll be done up if you don't let go."

"I can't, Dick. I'm all right. What is to be done next?"

"We think they'll try to get the scabs' dinner into the factory to them, rather than risk marching them out. We want to add a little seasoning to their soup."

"It's all right to bother the scabs, but it doesn't get us anywhere."

"Ye ought to break up some more of yer machines, Dick, that cripples the output," Mrs. Rafferty urged.

"Patsy and I are to have another go at them to-night," he agreed.

"Card will get you two boys first, if he can. You know that, don't you?"

"Sure we know ut," said Patsy, strolling in. "Card is lookin' fer a chanct to put his dirk into *me*!"

"Don't let it happen, then—" she urged.

"Say, lady, I wasn't bornded yisterday," he grinned.



"Come on, Dick. The fellas is gatherin' in the lot."

They went out, and presently Joan and Mrs. Rafferty followed them. The whole district was drifting toward the commissariat tent, where the cooks could be seen working over their great pots. The noon whistle blew as usual, but nothing happened. Presently a detachment of the special village police marched toward the cook tent.

"Here they come, fellas—git ready wit yer old eggs an' vegetables for the scabbies' dinner," shouted a striker. They were mostly armed with pockets full of contributions. The village police got together for a conference. Even aided by the scab guards they could not hold off the whole crowd and help carry the food at the same time. The man who was trying to direct them, kept one eye on the strikers. In answer to his urgent orders, a cook swung a huge iron kettle onto the ground in front of the tent. Instantly a rock, well aimed, knocked off the lid, and a shower of donations was hurled at the cauldron. A proportion of them landed, to the tune of much laughter from the strikers.

"'Tis better to give than to receive," howled one of them.

The cook hastily withdrew the kettle and after ineffectual efforts to fish out the foreign matter, he called the guards all inside.

After prolonged discussion they appeared and went back to the factory.

"Come on, boys, they're goin' to march the scabs out after all."

With a yell they ran after the retreating forms of the police. They stood on guard before the doors again, while the leader went inside. Presently he re-

turned and gave an order. The special deputies drew their revolvers and the scabs marched out. The strikers began to follow them across to the camp.

Dick called to Patsy and Joan saw them with several others drop away from the mob, and make a detour back toward the farthest of the factory buildings. Only the main building was guarded. A picket was on duty, protecting the rest of the shops. Joan followed her boys. She suspected that they were going to try to disable more machines.

As she came into the yards at the back, she saw the main members of the scouting party engaging the picket in a lively argument. He gave a signal of distress which brought the other guard from the big building to the rescue.

At that moment Dick and Patsy cut across for the basement windows, through which they had gained access on the night before. Joan ran in after them, but decided to stay on guard at the bottom of the stairs. She heard them running about overhead. Then there was a sound of some one, on the gravel path coming toward the house. She sped up the stairs and warned the boys. They made for a side window, dropped ten feet and got away—but Joan turned to face two of the policemen. They grabbed her and hurried her out, taking her by a back way to the police station. There they locked her up on a charge of attempt to destroy property. She asked to be put in with the other striking girls. But she was led to a cell which was exceedingly dirty and uncomfortable, and left to her own reflections.

At first she was glad to be there. She had saved the boys, and for the time being she was out of it. She had no responsibility to shoulder. But as the after-

noon waned and she thought of the night in that hateful place, she began to think of ways of getting out. Then, too, it might be that this particular night would be the time when Dick needed her most. The temper of the strikers was growing uglier hour by hour— She really ought to be out, and in the fight.

She finally wrote a line on a paper to Gregory. "In jail. Will you help me?" and persuaded the jail keeper to telephone it to Farwell Hall. Then she sat down to await his answer. It got dark in the cell, and friendly mice began to run about. Joan felt as if creepy things were making their sure way toward her. She walked up and down impatiently. Suppose Gregory were not at the Hall—suppose he had gone to New York. She might have to stop in this filthy place for days! Why hadn't Dick and Patsy discovered that she was lost? They would never give a thought to her, the selfish young beasts!

She worked herself into a fever of nerves before the sound of the jailer's coming and the light of his lantern encouraged her.

"Did you send the message?" she called eagerly.

"Joan!" came Gregory's deep voice in protest.

He stood outside the barred door looking through at her, in the midst of the dark, smelly cell.

"Oh—I thought you would never come," she exclaimed, with a relieved sense of everything being all right now. She swallowed hard and tried to smile at him. "I got arrested," she ended feebly.

"Hurry with that door," he ordered the man. She stepped out and he laid his hand on her arm and led her out.

"Am I free now?" she asked him.

"Yes. I got the charge dismissed this time as it

was my property you were destroying, but I can't promise to do that again."

"I wasn't destroying your property. I went in to warn Dick and Patsy, and they got me. The boys escaped. I wouldn't have asked you to get me out, but I think I ought to be with Dick tonight. The crowd is getting ugly."

He stood looking down at her earnestly.

"Can't you come out of this? If you knew how I felt when I saw you in that filthy hole—"

"I can't come out of it, Gregory, until you come in. Don't you see that?" she said with an earnestness equal to his own. They neither of them knew that for the first time she had used his Christian name.

"It's such futile business, child," he protested.

"I'm in this thing now. I must see it through," she answered. "It's the only way you've left us."

He bowed, and lifted his hat to leave her.

"Thank you so much for coming to help me," she said.

He smiled at that, and her heart shut with a little spasm of pain. When he was gone, she hurried back to the Raffertys'. The boys had grabbed their supper and gone out, Mrs. Rafferty reported. She insisted on giving Joan something to eat. In answer to Joan's questions as to whether the boys had missed her, the Irish woman said that they supposed she had gone to her room. Joan told the story of her arrest.

"An' how did ye git out?"

"I sent for Mr. Farwell and he got me off."

"Fer the love av Mike!" exclaimed Mrs. Rafferty. At that moment a suspicion was born in her mind.

"Did they tell you what was on tonight?"

"No—there was an awful scrap whin the scabs wint back at noon, an' another whin they come out at six. They do say the three big machines is busted, too. Trouble tonight, I'm thinkin'."

"Many of our men hurt in the scrap?"

"Shure, about tin heads busted, the byes was sayin'. Wan av thim fool specials shot into the air! A few more mistakes loike that, an' they'll be the divil to pay."

"Are you coming out?"

"I am. I ain't goin' to miss the big show."

They went along together, to where the strikers stood in groups, in the lot. There were a few speakers haranguing here and there, but no excitement was afoot so far. They came upon Dick and Patsy, together as usual.

"Where did you cut to, after you gave us the warning?" Dick asked Joan.

"I cut to jail! I'd have been there yet, if I'd had to depend on you!" she retorted.

"Jail? What do you mean?" he demanded.

"They caught me before I could run—"

"They arrested you?"

"Certainly."

"Damn them!" cried Dick.

"How did ye get out?" Patsy interrupted.

"Mr. Farwell got me out."

"Why didn't you send for me?" Dick said hotly.

"Because I didn't think you'd do any good. It's all right now, so long as I'm out."

Just then a boy came tearing across the lot toward them.

"Card has called out the militia," he shouted, "the troopers are coming on the 9:20 train."

This was greeted with a roar of anger. Voices took up the news and passed it on.

"Git together what ye can, byes, an' give the militia a hearty welcome. This is King Farwell's work—yez can bet."

They ran for any kind of weapon which they hoarded and in a few minutes the lot was vacant, save for the tents. The crowd surrounded the station, just as it had to receive the scabs. Only this time they were silent, instead of joking. Faces were white and set. When the troops came, real trouble came.

Joan and Mrs. Rafferty urged the boys not to make any rush upon the militia—it would only mean shooting. Joan made a speech, begging the men to let the troops in without resistance, and to use their brains to outwit them. The militia could not think, it could only shoot.

Card appeared as the train was due. He had a bandage on his head, and he was conspicuously armed.

"If you fellows make any breaks here tonight, there will be fewer of ye here tomorrow," he shouted as the train came in.

The militia detrained, revolvers drawn, and began to march through the crowd, shoving men and women aside roughly.

The strikers raised a yell of hate.

"Forward—charge!" rapped the order. The soldiers plunged through, and the crowd gave fight. The strikers managed to break up the alignment for a second. The officer ordered them to clear the station platform. In the fracas, Card made for Patsy, brandishing his revolver. Mrs. Rafferty saw him coming. She was carrying a length of pipe which she swung and

hit Card in the wrist, throwing his revolver into the crowd. Somebody grabbed it and shot.

At that the militia opened fire deliberately. There were men, women and children in the crowd. Dick was standing on a bench against the wall, where he could watch the proceeding. The cold cruelty of what happened was burned into the boy's brain. He saw the soldiers fire, he saw people fall all about him—he saw one child clutch at his mother's skirts, then disappear. It was all over in a few seconds, and the militia was on its way, double quick to the factory. The strikers staid behind to gather up their wounded. Dick saw Joan and Mrs. Rafferty at work over the child—he recognized it as little Jim Rafferty. He saw that Patsy was all right, and then, slowly, like a dazed drunken thing, he started to run slowly after the disappearing soldiers.

## CHAPTER XXV

GREGORY went back to the Hall, after getting Joan out of jail, with his mind a seething torment. The mere thought of the girl in that filthy cell, where the town drunkard had probably spent the previous night, was enough to distract him. What worse things might happen to her? The lawlessness of a mob like that knew no bounds. She could not know what dangers she played with, and he was coming back to the safety of the Hall, leaving her down there with those devils. He wished the town of Farwell were in the bottom of the sea! He wished his father and his great grandfather had spent their money in riotous living, rather than to have established the hated factories. Should he call off Larsen, countermand the Saunders orders, give in to the workers, and so get Dick and Joan to come home again?

His dinner went off the table, course after course scarcely touched. How could he eat? What were those children eating for their dinner? There was no place in the village—they must be depending on some cheap boarding house food. It spoiled all the delicacies the cook sent up. The cook, in turn, wept. Later in the evening Mrs. Craddock invaded the library to protest.

“Mr. Farwell, sir—”

“Ah—Mrs. Craddock?” he said, looking up from the book he was pretending to read.



"Unless you can make out to eat more, sir, Annie the cook, will leave. She sez as she hez been here for many a year, but she still has her proper pride."

"What has my appetite to do with Annie's proper pride?" he inquired.

"If you don't like her cookin', she prefers not to stay."

"Nonsense! Tell her I do like her cooking. I have not been very well for a few days, that is all."

"It's been ever since Mr. Dick left us, Mr. Farwell."

"Has it? Well, possibly so."

"Nothing has been the same, sir, since that vampire came among us—"

"Vampire, Craddock?"

"That woman."

"That will do, Craddock," sharply. "Miss Babcock is doing me the very great service of looking after my nephew, during some trouble he has got us all into. I am very grateful to her."

"Excuse me, sir. I didn't mean to bust out like that."

"Don't let it happen again, please."

"No, sir. Are we to keep on with that office system in the house that—that was lately installed?"

"Certainly. I want everything to go on exactly as it did under Miss Babcock's management."

"Very good, sir," with an abused sigh.

"Good night, Mrs. Craddock."

"Good night, Mr. Farwell. You wouldn't be goin' to New York, sir?"

"No."

"Cook an' I was wonderin' if you wouldn't ask some company to stay with you, sir—"

"You and cook need not worry at all about me, Craddock. I do not want company, nor a trip to New York," he smiled.

"Good night, sir."

"You and cook may go to New York, if you like."

"Oh, no, sir."

After her departure he set himself determinedly to keep his mind off speculation as to what was happening in the village. He tried several new books, arrived by post that very day. One interested him for half an hour because he thought Joan would like it. He laid it down finally and played a few records on the victrola—her favourites or Dick's. When he realized what he was doing, he shut it off angrily. Why could he not dismiss the precious pair from his thoughts. They gave him and his rights good and little consideration. They did not care if he sat up there, worrying himself sick about them. Not they, they were too intent upon setting his employes against him, they were too absorbed in wrecking his property. He went over Dick's denunciation of him, recalling every word. He remembered how the boy had started to come toward the car with Joan, in answer to his call that day in the street, and how he turned away with a look of absolute hate.

Joan's concern for his safety, her appeal to him to keep out of harm's way, up at the Hall, irked him. Did he seem an old man to her, needing a woman's protection? He glowed at the thought of how she sprang to his rescue, facing that mob even while he raged at it.

Her words of parting, after her release from jail, spoke themselves again—"I cannot come out, until you

come in, Gregory—" She had said that surely—she had called him Gregory. It had not come to him at the time.

He went to the window and looked down toward the village. Its lights twinkled dimly, a scattered group.

"Joan!" he said aloud—"Joan."

He paced up and down the long room. Must he give up the habit of his lifetime, must he tear down the slowly builded wall, which he had laid, stone on stone, between himself and this 20th Century world? Must he at the call of this girl, go down into the arena he had scorned, and do battle like the rest of the unfortunates born of this hateful time? Was he willing to make this sacrifice for the love of this girl? It seemed to have settled into that in his thoughts.

He went back to the window and gave himself up to the dream of loving her, being loved by her. All at once something caught his eye—held it. He gave a low exclamation and stood still.

Joan had stayed behind when the strikers had run after the troops, to help some of the other women with the ones who had been hurt. They gave such rough first-aid as they could—until the doctor came. He ordered a wagon, lined with straw from the livery stable and they managed to get the injured ones home. No one was killed, by some miracle.

Mrs. Rafferty and Joan waited until the last one was disposed of. Then between them they carried Jim home. The doctor had bandaged the child's leg, where the bullet went through, and he promised to come in at the first opportunity to see that the boy was all right. He had several more serious wounds to attend to first.

Joan insisted that a cot be made up for Jimmy in the parlour, where Dick slept. Mrs. Rafferty protested that it was Dick's room and he might not like it, but Joan took matters in her own hands and together they made a bed and got the boy into it. He was nervous and excited and all the other Rafferty children were the same. They could not be kept out of the parlour, so thrilled were they with their brother's importance.

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get these youngsters to bed and sit with them until Dick and Patsy come in. You lie down on Dick's bed, near Jimmy, Mrs. Rafferty."

"Ye can't sit up with all yer clothes on—gurl," protested Mrs. Rafferty.

"I'll run over to my room and get a heavy bathrobe. Then I can make myself comfortable. You go on in the parlour and shut the door. Jimmy must get to sleep."

"Ye certainly arr a dearr!" quoth Mrs. Rafferty, obeying orders.

Joan offered a prize to the first Rafferty to get into bed before her return. She hurried to her room, got the wrapper, a book, and a letter from Miss Earl which was under her door, and was back in a very short time. All the young Raffertys were disposed of for the night, and a babel arose as to which one had won the prize.

"I'll give each one of you a prize in the morning, if you'll go right to sleep now, chick-a-biddies," she smiled.

So four pairs of eyelids were *scrouged* together in the effort to induce immediate sleep. Joan managed to get off some of her clothes, and to make herself easy. She set the kerosene lamp in the corner farthest away

from the children, and sat down to open Miss Earl's letter. It was a strange place for a letter of little Miss Earl's to be read. The quaint, introspective New England face came before Joan's eye. What would Miss Earl do in an armed camp, Joan wondered.

"My dear Joan Babcock—" it began. "I can no longer think nor say 'Miss Babcock,' because you have let me come into your life and thoughts in such an intimate way. I feel myself to be all wrapped up in this strange, unheard-of situation you are in. Truly it is well that the gift of prophecy is rare with us. As you say the chance meeting of that spring day was to change several lives. I look forward with great impatience to the time when I can hear the whole story and come to know all its interweaving elements. The facts you give me of the present crisis are indeed startling. I wish I could look in on you at this moment and see what is happening with you. I shall be very anxious until I know you are safe.

"But as to the immediate situation, I want to say this. The world is thrust forward by such dynamic personalities as yours, even by your mistakes. There is danger in action, but more in tranquil inaction, in feeble acquiescence in the face of injustice and wrong.

"I suppose this will sound strange to you, coming from me. I belong so to my past, to my forbears. With all the liberating influences of my education, my experience, my own thinking, my first instinctive reaction is the norm of the long line of conservatives behind me. But you—you stand out all by yourself—belonging to yourself. You *must* believe in yourself! I believe in you entirely. Whatever you may have done to arouse this boy to his duty, you did from the highest motives. It must work out for good, my dear.

"The thought of the poor, elegant Mr. Farwell does distress me somewhat. But he is like me, I think, a part of his past, and we must step aside for you, who are the future. . . ."

Joan sat and pondered that sentence for a long time. It touched her deeply, Miss Earl's belief in her. From the very first moment she had looked into the clear, grey eyes of the head of the Bureau, she had known that they understood each other. Totally unlike in nature and inheritance, there had happened between them in a flash of eyes, that subtle thing we call affinity. She read the letter again. Her friend was right. She must not lose her confidence in herself, in the righteousness of her Cause, even if it did bring personal suffering to Dick and Gregory and herself. Aye, and to the Raffertys and all their friends in the factory. But it was right that men should get the decencies of living in exchange for a life of toil. That was the fight she and Dick were in on. . . .

She heard the sound of some one out back of the shanty, some one in the lean-to where Mrs. Rafferty kept the kerosene can and the pails and tubs and extras needed by her family. Thinking it was one of the boys, she stepped to the door, opened it and spoke softly, not to awaken the children. There was no answer—no sound of any one moving, although she was sure she had heard something strike one of the pails. She closed the door again, but stood looking out. Presently she heard it again—then she was sure she saw some one move out of the shadow and run. She was frightened now. She tip-toed to the parlour door, to speak to Mrs. Rafferty, but the noise of her snoring indicated that she was getting a much-needed rest. Joan went back to the rear door to watch.

Then the front door opened and closed. Quickly, with beating heart, she went to the hall. It was Patsy—

"Hello—you here! Where's ma?"

"In there with Jimmy. Where's Dick?"

"Ain't he here?"

"No. What happened?"

"Nuthin'. No use goin' up against guns, ye know. The tin soldiers has gone to bed, so us fellas is goin' to do loikewise."

"But wasn't Dick with you?"

"No. I seen him go after the militia from the station. I staid to see if Jimmy was hurt bad, ye remember, an' whin I run on, I didn't see 'im."

"But, Patsy, where can he be?" anxiously.

"I'll go out an' have a look. Some durty scab may a knocked him out—"

"I'll go with you."

"Ye'll not. Stay here, I'll be back in a jiffy."

He went out, and Joan went back into the kitchen to wait. She covered up all the children before she drew her chair to the window.

When Dick left the station to run after the militia he had no definite idea in his mind as to where he was going or what he intended to do. He had seen soldiers shoot into a crowd of unarmed women and children, who were doing no harm, breaking no law. He felt he must make his protest against the whole system, somehow, this very night, while this fury burned within him.

He saw that the crowd gathered about the soldiers in the lot, but he did not join it. He went away over to the far corner away from everybody, and threw himself face down on the ground. He was shaking all

over with excitement, half sobbing. Perhaps the thing to do was to kill himself, to get out of a world where injustice flourished and waxed fat. Gregory Farwell's words came back to him, meaningless before—"I cannot live in a world which expresses itself through greed and power." And yet, Uncle Gregory was the root of the evil. It was because he would not do his share in the work of remaking the world, that Farwell was a waste place. Maybe he had come down, sometime in the past and looked it over—maybe it had sickened him as it did Dick tonight. He must remember to find out about that. If he had gone up the hill again to his remote luxurious life, he was a coward. . . . No—Dick could not kill himself, or Uncle Gregory could say the same of him. He must stay on and fight the thing through. Those men, shooting down little Jim Rafferty because Uncle Gregory's factory buildings must be protected, forsooth! Did the militia shoot down Uncle Gregory, who had been breaking the laws for years—the state laws for factory conditions, as well as the laws of human decency? No—he was safe, because he had money and power. He had not earned either of them, as Patsy had, he had merely inherited them, but they were none the less pregnant for that. . . . Suppose he, Dick, should refuse his inheritance of the factories, refuse to take a cent he did not earn? But how would that help the boys here? It was quicker for them, if he stood by and built up a model plant!

But he was only one individual—the System, the exploitation of labour was everywhere, had always been. What could *he* do to change it? To clean up his own little door yard—that was not enough! He wanted to smash and demolish and build again, hun-



dreds of model factories, with a co-operative plan. . . .

A yell from the crowd, in the distance, brought back his tired, overwrought mind to the situation here, now at hand. He could smash and demolish and rebuild here maybe. Little Jim Rafferty shot down for nothing, and a woman's face, as they fired, lifted themselves before him again. He lay perfectly still for several minutes and then he stumbled stiffly to his feet, and approached the crowd. The militia was setting up camp, with the strikers watching and jeering.

He edged around to the factory yard—two sentinels patrolled there. He made a wide detour and came in among the other buildings. Sentries marched to and fro there, also. Uncle Gregory's precious property was protected now by the state. The strikers paid taxes to the state to support this organization, which could be turned upon them at the call of any property owner. He'd show them what he thought of the whole damnable scheme!

He hurried back across the lot to Mrs. Rafferty's wood shed. He found what he needed there and appropriated it. He was conscious of the shouting and hooting of the crowd—he paused to watch the way the shadows shot across it from the bonfire built by the soldiers. The wind was high and the flames leapt up. He scuttled into the darkness himself. He made his way into the yard at back, crawling on his hands and knees, dodging the sentry, every nerve alert and stretched to the breaking point. For an hour he was about his work, making slow progress toward the main building. It took great caution. He could only advance as the sentry walked to the end of his beat, and there was only a second then, before his fellow passed,

coming the other direction. But the darkness helped. The few lamps had been demolished by strikers, so the sentinels carried lanterns.

After what seemed years of waiting and crawling forward, Dick managed to get into the basement window which had served him twice before. It did not take him long to accomplish his purpose and then followed the tedious process of escape.

It was late when he joined the crowd in the lot, looking for Patsy. The men were beginning to fall away toward the shanties. What use was there in going against guns? Death did not help their cause. Dick spoke with several of them—then he said good night and started back toward the Raffertys', when a yell arose from the guard at the factory. The camp sentry answered. The strikers stopped in their tracks. A puff of smoke popped out of a window, then a faint glow of colour appeared inside.

"It's a fire!" cried a striker. The crowd took it up—"The factory's on fire!"

Patsy realized the situation the minute he rounded the corner of the first building, in his search for Dick.

"What you doin' here?" said a voice behind him and a rough hand laid hold of him.

He made no answer. The guard called one of his fellows who in turn handed Patsy over to one of Card's policemen. He took him to the jail.

The village fire department was called in, and responded tardily. The wind was high and the flames had started in every building at once, so that the fire gained ground fast. It seemed only a minute until great flambeaux shot up toward the heavens and threw into high light the mean little shanties that hugged the factory. The whole sky glowed with light, even the

great house on the hill was tinted with its red. Gregory, standing at his window, remembered Dick's *Nero* and shivered, even while the fierce beauty of the sight fascinated him.

It may have been half an hour, it might have been many hours he watched it—then with a superb last flare of glory—it sank down, and the village was in darkness, as if blotted out from him by a huge hand.

## CHAPTER XXVI

FROM every direction people ran toward the huge bonfire that lighted the town. Half dressed, or in hastily snatched up garments, they hurried to the lots. It was like the mob assembling in a stage scene. The militia drew a fire line about the danger zone. Inside that the fire company, with its meagre equipment, fought bravely but futilely against the encroaching flames. Outside the line, the lot was black with onlookers. Their voices rose and fell in exclamations, as if they were watching fireworks. Nearly all the factory workers were in the crowd, but here and there in the shanties some frightened woman was setting out the few possessions in the door yard, for safety. The children were dressed and the old and crippled were hurried out in cots, or in chairs so that they might be moved quickly in case of need. The wind was so high that it would be a miracle if sparks did not fall on the shanties. They would burn like tinder if once they caught fire.

In the midst of the excitement of getting her moved, the rheumatic old woman, whose house Dick and Joan had visited once, died of heart failure. When her daughter discovered this fact, she knelt on the cold ground, beside her dead until dawn. She never saw the fire at all.

There was as usual a comic element in the calamity. People dragged the wrong things into safety. One distracted woman emptied her house entirely, except

for the baby, who slept through the clatter and excitement.

Joan, at the first sight of flames, hurried to arouse Mrs. Rafferty. Together they dressed the children and set Jimmy's cot out of doors.

"You stay here with them, Mrs. Rafferty, and let me go to look for the boys," Joan said.

"Don't worry—they're all roight—" the older women assured her.

"But Patsy had not seen Dick for an hour or more. Something may have happened to him."

She made her way across the lot. Great tapers of flame pierced the night sky. The memory of Whiting came to her, with her own phrase—"Altar fires of modern commercialism." Her mind was too paralyzed with the shock of the disaster to question its origin in any way. She had felt a premonition about Dick, ever since she had watched him go from the station. She saw his face the moment before he ran after the militia, and it terrified her. Her fear was that something dreadful had happened to him. She pushed her way up to the fire and spoke to the militia men—

"Has anybody been hurt?"

"Not as far as I know."

"Could you find out from somebody?"

"I could not."

"How did it start?"

"Some fella set it afire—"

"Set it afire—?"

"Sure—one of yer strikers. State's prison fer him all right, all right."

"But do they know who did it?"

"Sure—they got him."

"Who was it?" she whispered.

"I don't know. They got him in the lock-up all right. Friend of yours?"

She turned away and skirted the crowd, making her way to the village street. Once there, she hurried to the old jail. It was all shut up and she could not get inside. She leaned up against the door, her head against the panel, and tried to think. Somebody must help her—she would try to get Gregory.

At the Raffertys' she found one child on guard over Jimmy but Mrs. Rafferty and the other youngsters had been unable to resist the excitement.

"Patsy hasn't been here?" Joan demanded.

"No'm."

"Nor Dick?"

"No'm. Plaze, Miss Babcock, stay wit Jimmy an' let me go to the fire?"

"All right. Find your mother and stay with her."

The boy was off like a rocket.

"I want to go—I can walk all right," begged Jimmy.

"Oh, Jimmy dear, stay with me. I don't want to go," wailed Joan.

He patted her awkwardly.

"All roight—all roight," he said soothingly.

"Oh, Jimmy, I'm afraid," she whispered.

"Don't ye be afraid—thim foires can't git way over here—"

"It isn't the fire, Jimmy—"

A figure zig-zagged down the street unevenly and turned in the gate. Joan rose quickly.

"Dick!" she exclaimed.

He turned a white vacant face toward her, with glowing unnatural eyes.

"It burns and burns," he said.

"Dick, where have you been?"

"Out there, where they shot them—shot the woman an' lil' Jimmy Rafferty—" his voice trailed off into nothing.

She peered at him closely. He could not be drunk.

"He's a coward—they shot them," he cried—"women and Jimmy Rafferty."

"Jimmy's here, Dick, he isn't badly hurt," she said. Jimmy began to whimper with fright.

"It's all wrong—I can't bear it—but I couldn't—"

"Dick, come to bed, dear—you're worn out with excitement," she begged, trying to lead him indoors.

"No—I got to fight it out," he answered wearily.

She realized that he was ill now—that the shock had been too much. She coaxed him, and petted him and plead with him until she got him indoors, and finally into bed.

"I want Joan," he said over and over—"she can help me."

"This is Joan, Dick. See—I'm here, dear. I shall not leave you."

"Not you—Joan. She can help me. She explains things—"

She dared not leave him to go to the doctor and no one was within call. She went to the door and explained to Jimmy and asked him to summon any one he saw and to lie still, and help her, because Dick was very sick. Then she sat down beside the lad and laid her hand on his hot head and tried to comfort him. But her words never reached that poor tortured brain. He went over and over the shooting, and cried over little Jim Rafferty.

"Uncle Greg shot him—poor Jim—he didn't do a thing," he moaned.

"Oh, Dick, don't say that. Why, Uncle Gregory wouldn't hurt a living thing—he never saw Jim—" she protested.

"He shot him—I saw it," he said and went over it all again.

The light from the fire sent great waves across the room, as if a searchlight was playing over the district. Joan shuddered and dropped her head in her hands.

"Oh, God—is this my work?" she sobbed.

Dick's voice went on and on.

Gregory started from the Hall in a runabout which he drove himself. He had not called any servants or spoken of the fire. It was not the fire which he concerned himself with, it was Dick and Joan. The strikers had managed to use the torch, obviously, but there had been, no doubt, riot and trouble before they succeeded. He must know whether his two were safe.

Perhaps the strikers had helped him out of his quandary—with the factory gone, his two radicals might come home.

He tore along the dark roads and into the town. He saw the big crowd. He left his car in the road, and hurried to the fire line. There he spoke to the first man he met.

"What's this? Are you a member of the militia?"

"Sure."

"When did the militia come?"

"Tonight—9:20."

"Who called you?"

"The mayor. Who are you?"

"I'm Mr. Farwell—the owner of the factory. Anybody hurt here?"

"Nope. Got the fella who started it—he's in jail."

"So? Trouble before the fire?"



"We shot 'em up a bit, at the station."

"On whose orders?"

"They started it."

"Were they armed?"

"Somebody had a gun and used it. We returned the compliment."

"Who was hit?"

"Several of 'em, I guess."

"Any dead?"

"I dunno. Do you want to go through and speak to the Fire Marshall, Mr. Farwell?"

"No."

Gregory turned and with his cap pulled low over his face, he went through the crowd looking for his strikers. He saw no sign of them. He did not want to speak to any one for fear of being recognized. If he was, and they started a demonstration against him, he would be delayed in getting to Dick, who might need him. If he only knew where Joan roomed.

"Is Jim hurt bad, Mrs. Rafferty?" a voice near him said.

Rafferty, that was the name of the boy who went with Dick on the trip west. He waited until he could get a chance and then he spoke to the woman.

"Mrs. Rafferty, I'm Mr. Farwell. I'm looking for Dick and Joan. Can you help me?"

She started and stared at him. All the years she had hated him, she had thought of speeches to hurl at him, if she ever had a chance, the arrogant over-lord! All she saw was an anxious-faced man, who humbly asked her help.

"Dick is lost an' Joan wint to foind him."

"Your son—would he know—?"

"I haven't seen him fer hours—"

"Will you tell me where my nephew and Miss Babcock live?"

"She's got a room at the Swigerts' in the village, an' he lives with us."

"Could I go to your house—he might have come back by this time, mightn't he?"

She started toward the shanties, without a word, Gregory following. He saw nothing, heard nothing of the confusion about him!

When they came in sight of the Rafferty cabin, Jimmy set up a shout. Mrs. Rafferty began to run and Gregory kept pace with her. Jimmy started an explanation, as they approached, which brought Joan to the door.

"Gregory—" she cried, "it's Dick—"

"He isn't dead?"

"No—but he's terribly ill. The shock—"

He stepped inside the damp, miserable room, where Dick tossed on a cot. The only light came from the lamp in the hall. Joan brought it in and held it so Gregory could see his nephew.

"Uncle Greg shot him—poor li'l Jimmy—he didn't do anything—" the dull voice went on.

"What's he saying?" Gregory demanded.

She shook her head.

"I want Joan—"

"He doesn't know me," she explained.

"How long has he been like this?"

"I don't know—it seems years. He staggered in from the fire and I got him to bed."

"We must get the doctor here," Gregory said. "I'll go for him."

She nodded and he went away. Joan helped Mrs. Rafferty to carry Jim's cot into the kitchen. The fire

was dying down now, and people were drifting homewards.

"You didn't see Patsy?" she inquired of her friend.

"No—he'll turn up—he's somewheres," she replied cheerfully.

It seemed a long time until Gregory came with the doctor. Mrs. Rafferty was summoned and she and Joan answered his many questions as well as they could.

"He has had a very serious nervous shock, I should say," he said finally.

"We must get him to the Hall at once," Gregory remarked. "We can put a cot in a big car—"

"I wouldn't move him now, Mr. Farwell," the doctor objected.

"But he can't stay in this place—it's damp and awful—" Gregory began.

"All my children have lived in it—most av 'em were born in ut—an' it's your house, ye know," Mrs. Rafferty said hotly.

"Maybe by tonight we could move him—but not now," the doctor repeated. "I'll give him a sleeping powder, and he must have absolute quiet, Mrs. Rafferty. Can you manage that?" he asked kindly.

"I can."

The doctor administered the dose and offered to stay the night out. It was nearing dawn now. The Rafferty children trooped home and were hushed and gotten to bed by their mother. The fire was over—the factory in ruins. Gregory, Joan and the doctor sat in the Rafferty parlour, and listened to Dick's moaning.

"Won't you go to your room and rest?" Gregory said to the girl finally.

"No, thanks, I couldn't."

The powder finally took effect and the voice was

silent. The doctor went away to get his breakfast. At broad daylight Dick had one flash of consciousness, and in that moment he recognized Gregory.

"No—no—no—Go away!" he cried. "Don't touch me—you shot Jimmy Rafferty and he didn't do a thing. Go away from here—I won't have you—Joan—Joan—"

"Yes, Dick, yes."

"Make him go away. Don't let him hurt Patsy—"

"No—he doesn't want to hurt him. He loves you, Dick," she said brokenly, holding the boy's head against her breast. He clung to her frantically.

"I'll never go back to the Hall—take him away."

"All right, Dick, I'll go," said Gregory, and left them.

It was a long time before Joan could get Dick quieted, but at last he fell into a troubled sleep. She went to the door to see if Gregory was outside, but there were no signs of him. The anguish in his face when he had left the room haunted her.

The Raffertys like all the rest of the district, slept late. Joan longed for a cup of coffee, but she had not the heart to waken those who slept in the kitchen. The doctor came again, left more powders, shook his head at her recital of Dick's outburst against his uncle.

"Mr. Farwell is at my house now, waiting for word of him. I think we must humour him now. We can manage with him somehow, here, can't we?"

"Yes. Mrs. Rafferty is kindness itself."

"I'll have a talk with her. We can get in some things to make him comfortable and a nurse—"

"Couldn't I take care of him, Doctor?"

"You can help—but I want a regular nurse in here for a time. When she comes, by the way, you go

home, take this, and sleep until I call you," he ordered.

"I'm all right. There is Mrs. Rafferty now."

After the doctor and Mrs. Rafferty finished their talk, Joan had a cup of coffee with the disheveled family.

"You aren't anxious about Patsy?" she asked again.

"Love av Mike, gurl, I'd spind me toime frettin' if I was loike you. Patsy can take care of hissilf. He comes an' goes, loike it plazes him. He'll turn up all roight."

About noon the nurse came, and Joan, tottering with weariness and nerves was sent to her room for a long rest. Mrs. Rafferty promised to come for her if Dick woke up and asked for her. She did not so much as glance at the ruins as she went along— She was too worn out to care about anything. Once in her room, she fell on her bed, with her clothes on, and remembered nothing for hours.

For all of Mrs. Rafferty's reassurance of Joan, she was not entirely easy in her mind about her oldest born. So after the nurse was installed, Joan sent off and the children driven forth, she set out on a still hunt. She went first to Grady's saloon. The entire male population of the district was there. She inquired about her son—no one had seen him.

"I seen him about eleven o'clock last night, just before the fire broke out, an' he was askin' fer Dick an' sayin' he was goin' home to bed."

"Dick's in bed at my house with brain fever er somethin', but Patsy ain't showed up—"

"Have ye tried the jail, Mrs. Rafferty?"

"I have not."

"Better take a look there. Card would git Pat, if he could, ye know."

"Much obliged—'tis an idea!" said the Irish woman and went to the jail.

"Is my son Patsy in here?" she demanded of the clerk.

"He is."

"What for?"

"Settin' fire to the factories."

"'Tis a durty lie!"

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, or you'll get the cell next to him."

"When did they git him?"

"Last night, just after the fire broke out. He'll get State's Prison all right."

Mrs. Rafferty made no answer. She went out and down the street. At her own gate she saw the car from the Hall. Gregory was inside speaking with the nurse.

"Good morning, Mrs. Rafferty," he said.

"My bye is in jail fer burnin' yer factory. He didn't do ut. I want ye to go down there an' git him out."

"But, Mrs. Rafferty, I'm told they have evidence against him that—"

"I tell ye—he didn't do ut. I'm a-doin' what I can fer your boy. What'll you do for mine?"

## CHAPTER XXVII

**T**HE challenge which Mrs. Rafferty threw down to Gregory was one he could not avoid, and it was one he disliked taking up. It was true that at the moment he was indebted to her for kindness to Dick and to Joan, but the testimony of the guards who had arrested Patsy provided indisputable circumstantial evidence of his guilt. If this trouble-maker had deliberately set fire to the factory and burned it to ashes, Gregory argued that he must be prosecuted, and punished to the full extent of the law, no matter how hard it was on his mother. This kind of strike lawlessness must be crushed out and all such offenders should be dealt with summarily, to his thinking.

He urged his lawyers to use every effort to find more conclusive evidence than that Patsy was caught near the building, but he was determined to have the incendiary made an example.

The news that Patsy had been refused bail aroused Mrs. Rafferty to fury.

"He niver done it, I tell ye. It's a frame-up!" she said to Joan, who was heating Dick's broth in the kitchen.

"The truth will come out at the trial, Mrs. Rafferty—" Joan tried to comfort her.

"Why don't ye tell that Farwell frind av yours that he didn't do ut?" hotly.

The girl made no answer. Mrs. Rafferty went to

her, laid heavy hands on her shoulders and turned her so she could look in her face.

"Why don't ye tell him?" she repeated.

Joan dropped her head on the big woman's breast for a moment, then she said wearily—

"Dear Mrs. Rafferty, I'm afraid Patsy did do it."

The Irish woman shook her.

"Ye've gone back on us!"

"No—no—how can you say that? It's nearly driven me crazy, the thought that I couldn't go and get him off at once, because I was probably the last person to talk to him, that night."

"Well?"

"I go over it and over it, just like poor Dick."

"Tell me," the older woman commanded.

"I sat here, after you and Jimmy had gone to bed in the parlour, thinking and waiting for the boys to come home. I heard some one in the shed—the pails rattled, as if a man stumbled over them. I thought it was the boys so I opened the door and called them. Nobody answered. Then I was frightened. I shut the door and watched. I saw some man run, carrying a can."

"A can?"

"The kerosene can that was missing next day. You remember? I could hardly bear it when you looked for it—"

The old woman's red face was chalky white, but she stood there like a prisoner waiting to be shot.

"Go on," she said.

"I came to the door to call you, but you were sleeping and I knew how tired you were, so I went back to the kitchen. Presently Patsy came in. I asked about Dick—he said he hadn't seen him for an hour or two.



I was anxious about him, so he offered to go look for him."

"Did ye spake wid him about what ye seen?"

"No."

"Ye think he'd started the foire before he came into the house?"

"I—I don't know what I think!"

"If he'd started it before he come in, he wuz a fool to go out again. His alibi was bed."

"I tell you I don't know—the fire was blazing by the time he got back there, I'm sure."

"He couldn't a-done it the second trip, then—"

"No. But the kerosene can—"

"There's a can loike that in the lean-to av every shanty in the row—" hotly.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Rafferty, don't speak like that. If he did it, I know he did it because he thought it had to be done that way. You and Patsy are the best friends I have and I'd cut my tongue out before I'd say a word to harm or hurt either of you. Only you see, I just can't go to Mr. Farwell with this doubt in my mind."

"There's no doubt in my moind. He didn't do ut—that's all there is to ut."

"Won't they let you see him?"

"Not till after the trial."

"Have they set the day for it?"

"Yis—'tis to be on Friday, the 13th. A foine chanct he's got to get off *that* day."

"Justice works on Friday, too," Joan began.

"Justice—don't make me laff!"

"Have you heard what the Union has decided to do about paying strike benefits? I suppose with the factories burned, the strike is over."

"I hear they'll pay until the 15th. After that we can git out an' foind other jobs or we can sthay on here, in our usual luxury an' stharve."

The nurse came to the door.

"Mr. Norton's broth?"

"Oh—forgive me—I was talking to Mrs. Rafferty about something of great importance, and I forgot it. May I give it to him?"

"If you like."

Joan went into the room where Dick lay. He was still delirious when he was not in a stupor. The days since the fire had brought no relief to the poor overwrought boy, and the whole district hung over him, with the same anxiety that Joan and Gregory shared. Doctors had come down from New York for consultation, and to Gregory's urgency that the boy could not be left to die in this hovel, they replied that he could not be moved now—he must be kept as quiet as possible. They gave the local doctor full directions and arranged to keep in touch with the case.

It was a week after their visit, with Dick's condition still unchanged when Joan broached the subject in her thoughts to Gregory. He came to the shack every morning at ten to get full particulars of the night; he returned at five to hear the report of the day. He never stepped inside Dick's room, but his white, care-lined face bore witness of what was going on in his mind.

"Well, Joan?" he asked eagerly every morning.

"No change yet, Gregory," she answered him. "I want to suggest something, please," she added one morning.

"Yes?"

"I think perhaps we would better move the Raffertys

somewhere else until the crisis is over. They are perfectly wonderful, but you see, Jimmy's crutch, stumping around the house makes a noise, and they're coming and going. It is so tiny, and the walls are paper—"

"Yes—yes—by all means, move them. I should have thought of it before, only every day I hoped we could take him home—"

"Will you go with me to look for other quarters for them?"

"Oh—no—you know about this district—"

"I want you to come, please. The Raffertys have been very good to us—"

"All right. Shall we go now?"

Joan took him first to the tumble-down old shack where she had taken Dick, to visit the old woman, who died during the fire. The daughter, in black, with a tear-stained face, let them in. Joan explained, and led Gregory about. He looked like a man in Purgatory.

"I suppose we couldn't put those children here," she said.

"No—no," he agreed hastily.

She led the way through the entire district. She took him into tumble-down, filthy shanties where people swarmed. Everywhere they went, hate looked out of eyes at Gregory. He had not reduced his relation to Farwell to its personal element. To him the district was a blot—it did not exist—to the district he was the arch-fiend, to be hated, frustrated, harmed, if possible.

It was all a sickening revelation to him, but this day he was looking at its ugly body, and worse, into its hate-begrimed soul. What he saw there, terrified him, because he was beginning to see what had happened to Dick, how this sordidness had burned into his young mind, until it had set his thoughts aflame.

He glanced at Joan, now and then. Cool, aloof, she led the way. A kind inquiry, a tactful remark, an offer of help paved her way with the strikers. They were sullen with Gregory—but they were evidently fond of Joan. Everywhere people demanded the last news of Dick.

When the end of the ugly journey was reached, Joan said in a business-like way,

"I think the Gradys' is the best place—don't you?"

"But the roof leaks there."

"All the roofs leak. Your agent doesn't think roofs need repair."

"The gardener out at the Hall might take them for a while."

"That would be great for Jimmy—country and decent food."

They came to the shanty and Mrs. Rafferty stood at the door. Joan explained to her the idea, and asked her, most tactfully, if the children could go to the Hall for a week.

"They can not. I'll be beholden to him fer nuthin'," she replied.

"But I'd be beholden to you, Mrs. Rafferty, for letting Dick have the house—"

"I'll do ye no kindnesses," replied the Irish woman bitterly.

"But Dick, Mrs. Rafferty, surely you'll do him a kindness—one more added to your many. If you won't let the children go to the Hall, will you let them go to the Gradys' only for a while? Mrs. Grady will take them in, and there'll be no rent while Dick has the house, so you could pay the Gradys a bit—couldn't you? We would like you to stay here and help us, if you would, as assistant nurse, on salary?"

"I'll think about it," said the old woman, ungraciously.

So Gregory went away, up to the Hall, with this new vision of Inferno which Joan had sent home with him. Would he ever be free of it again? He looked out on the sweep of clean open country, and a vision of stagnant greenish waters, with rusty tin cans, old shoes and paper boxes floating on it, rose before him. What would an outlook like that do to a human mind? The smell of cold, musty dampness was in his nose, the chill of those rooms made him shiver, even before his own fire. The filth, the left-over, unwashed breakfast dishes, the dirty, sullen women, the thin, half-dressed children—Ugh! Was this the world Joan had come out of? He thought of her fine, friendly understanding of them, the way she took them as a matter of course.

It was into this world she had taken Dick, all soft and unprepared for its revelations. Was it any wonder that it had been too terrible for him? That his poor fevered mind went over and over each step in the tragic march of events? How they swept him on and out, and down! His poor, little-boy Dick, who could not endure the sight of him, even when delirium held sway in his disordered thoughts. That was the deepest hurt of all.

The little Raffertys were moved to the Gradys in due time, and became the most envied youngsters in the district, because the young Gradys were six in number themselves, so the accession of five more was a real lark. Mrs. Rafferty remained in charge of her own cabin, cooking for the invalid and the nurse. Joan practically moved over, herself, taking turns with the nurse in the actual care of the sick boy. He called for

her constantly, although he did not know her, when she sat with him.

Time seemed to have stopped for those anxious friends who watched over him. The news of the district filtered through to them, as if from a world they had left. The militia had departed, the scabs had vanished. Some of the strikers had found work in the village; the rest were beginning to plan to move on, as soon as the strike benefits ceased. Saunders, recovered from his wound, was told by Mr. Farwell that all plans in regard to the factories, depended on Dick's recovery. Nothing could be done at present. When Saunders circulated this information at Grady's saloon, indignation at the owner grew.

"What's it to King Farwell that some of us have worked in his factory and lived in his stinkin' holes fer five years?" cried one of the men.

"If you burn down his property, you can't expect him to give you a pension, out o' gratitude, can you?" inquired Saunders.

"How do you know we burned down his factory?"

"Everybody knows that devil Rafferty done it. They'll prove it on him, at the trial, believe me!"

"Supposin' he did do it—the Union had nothin' to do with it. We ain't told him to burn it—"

"Well, you be'n so crazy to git yer unions in here, an' now you see what happens. I told you to let 'em alone. It don't make any difference whether the Union ordered him to do it, er not. It was all a part of the strike, an' you fellas will pay the piper."

"Will we? Well, mebbe we ain't through with King Farwell yet! Mebbe he'll come in on the bill!"

"I'll remember you warned me, Tim," replied Saun-

ders, meaningly, "it may be of interest to the judge."

Saunders went out and the talk ran high. The situation was desperate for the men. No work in sight—only a few more days of sure provision for their families, and now Farwell announced that he would do nothing.

"If anything happened to Farwell, young Norton would have charge of the factories," Tim said slowly and with intent.

There was a brief silence, then some one muttered, "Dick may not get well."

"Just somethin' to remember," remarked Tim quietly.

As the time drew near for Patsy's trial, excitement in the district grew intense. Mrs. Rafferty engaged a lawyer to defend him, and never for an instant did her belief in his innocence waver.

The day before the event, Mrs. Rafferty was away nearly all day. She did not talk to Joan about her plans, since her admission of doubt about Patsy. The nurse had gone for her walk, and Joan sat in the silent house beside Dick. He had been quieter than usual, sleeping heavily all day. The doctor had come in twice to look at him. He refused to commit himself as to the patient's condition.

After he left, Joan dropped her head in her hands, with an incoherent appeal to God to help Dick. The shrill scream of children running past the house roused her. She went to close the window, that the sound might not arouse the patient. A soiled envelope was lying on the window sill, folded twice. She was on the point of sweeping it out into the yard, when something prompted her to take it up. She unfolded it and read in a pencil scrawl—

"Dick—It's all right. Keep mum about anything ye know. Yours, Patsy."

She read it twice. How had it come there? Did Dick know about the plan to burn the factory? Could he save Patsy, if only he could speak?

She went to sit beside him, leaning over him, trying to call to his spirit with her own. She concentrated her full force upon him. He lay perfectly still, with eyes closed, breathing heavily.

"Dick!" she said urgently. "Dick!"

Her voice seemed to pierce the thick non-consciousness that divided them. Slowly, slowly, his eyes opened, and fixed themselves on her, expressionless as usual.

"Dick—Patsy needs you—needs you so terribly," she said earnestly.

"Patsy?" he said thickly.

"Can you hear me, Dick? . . . Can you understand me?"

He inclined his head just a shade.

"Try to come back, Dick—come back and help us!"

"Help—you?"

She felt his mind grappling with ideas, trying to hold them, to get control. Should she risk shocking him with the news of the disaster which the fire had proved to his best friend? It might unhinge his mind forever, or it might strike it into action, and so save him. If only some one were here to advise her—or to forbid her—

"Joan—"

"You know me, Dick?"

He felt for her hand—it touched the crumpled envelope.

"That's for you—from Patsy."



He took it, but did not try to read it.

"You've been ill a long time—since the fire—"

A look of terror swept across his face at that, and she stopped, afraid to go on.

"You're better now—you're getting well—"

She saw that he was trying to get hold of facts, of something back there in consciousness.

"Patsy—?" he said, finally.

"Patsy is in jail," she answered, risking it all.

He frowned over that, trying to understand. She leaned toward him and spoke distinctly.

"They arrested him for setting the factory on fire."

There was no change in his face at that. She had not got it through to him. He stared up at the ceiling, inert.

"We must get Patsy off, Dick. It may mean state's prison to him, if they prove it on him. I don't know what to do, because I'm afraid he did it. You're the only one who knows the truth. Dick, you must help us."

Her re-iterated beating upon the doors of his mind was beginning to have an effect. He looked at her again. She went all over it once more. Little by little she caught his attention. She forced him to think, to answer. Her urgency, her passionate directness had their way with him. He fought her off, tried to slip away into the blessed nothingness that had wrapped him before, but she would not let him go. She laid firm hands upon him—she caught at his mind and held it—in the end he was awake, he listened.

She told him again of her fears, Mrs. Rafferty's faith, of Gregory's determination to find and punish the offender. She recalled to him Patsy's reputation as daredevil of the district. She stated Ben Card's

grudge against him. She told how she herself had sent him out to look for Dick, the night of the fire, and how they had caught him, near the factory, apparently red-handed.

She saw that he was taking it in, now. She hurried on to the climax. Tomorrow he was to come to trial. He had gotten a message to Dick, somehow—

"Read it," he said.

She choked back a sob of excitement and relief—and read—

"Dear Dick—It's all right—Keep mum about anything ye know. Yours, Patsy."

He considered it a moment.

"He means to stand for it!" he exclaimed.

"Evidently."

He sat up weakly.

"Dick, what are you going to do?"

"I must get to him!" he said, excitedly.

"No, no—please—lie down, and tell me what to do, I'll obey orders exactly."

He sank back, flushed and distressed.

"I mustn't fail Patsy," he said, wildly.

"Dick, we can get the trial put off—if you want to be called as a witness."

"Yes—yes—that's it," he said, "witness—" then he fainted.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

**W**HEN Gregory came to the shanty that afternoon, Joan came to the door to speak to him. She looked utterly spent, a ghost of herself.

"What is it? Is he worse?" he asked anxiously.

"No—he's better."

"But you—?"

"I took a terrible responsibility upon myself this afternoon, Gregory. I told Dick about Patsy coming to trial tomorrow. I pried into his mind, and made him think—"

"But you should not have done that!" he exclaimed.

"I had to do it," she began.

"What happened to him?" he interrupted.

"He made the effort, got my meaning, and then he fainted."

"How cruel of you!"

"I can't argue it with you, now. I'm too tired. I'll tell you all about it some time. The doctor says he is very weak and tired, but there is no harm done. He even admits that good may come of it."

"Is the nurse on duty now?"

"Yes."

"Get a coat and come for a drive—I have the runabout."

She obeyed mechanically and he tucked the rug about her carefully. A few moments later they were out of the town on an open road. Joan sat, leaning back,

numb from the events of the afternoon. Gregory did not speak, and they rode for miles in silence. Sometimes he glanced at her. How her youth and buoyancy had been crushed out! Why couldn't life have left them alone? They had been so merry at the Hall before the events of these past months had swept them all into strange new currents!

"Gregory, there is something that we must do."

"Yes?"

"We must get Patsy Rafferty's trial postponed until Dick is able to act as a witness."

"Dick?"

"Yes—he knows something about the fire that is of importance to the case."

"Was that what you made him think about?"

"Yes."

"Couldn't you have waited until the boy was able to tax his mind with the affairs of this rabble? Can't we ever get away from Farwell?" he cried.

"No, we can't get away, and I had to tell him that Patsy needed him. They love each other, those two, and I knew Dick would never forgive me if I let him lie there, unconscious, while they sent Patsy off for years, maybe."

"Joan, do you believe Rafferty to be guilty?"

"I don't know."

"Do you suspect any one else?"

"No."

"The evidence all points to Rafferty, doesn't it?"

She covered her face with her hands and made no answer.

"Joan—don't! I won't speak a word of the hateful thing again. I brought you out to get you away from it, and then I put you through the third degree myself."

"It's all right, only I'm so tired, I'm not myself. Will you help me get the trial postponed, Gregory?"

"I'll attend to it—put it out of your mind. It will be months, though, before Dick can testify."

"No—he will be able in a week, I think."

"Ridiculous! Why, he faints when he makes the least effort—"

"It wasn't the least effort—it was a terrible effort, Gregory. Get it put off for a week. Dick will be ready."

"I'll ask the doctor, first."

"If you like. Shall we go back and attend to it?"

"All right. Relax now, and don't talk."

"Thanks," she sighed, closing her eyes.

When they came into the town he said—

"This is a trifle unusual, you know. Your side ought to ask for this stay of trial, not my side."

"I thought you could fix it. It's Dick I was thinking of, even more than Patsy."

"I'm not thinking of Patsy at all. I think he burned down the factory and that Dick wants to try to get him off. If it is going to affect Dick's health, why, it's got to be put off, that's all. I'll see Rafferty's lawyer and we'll petition the Court."

"Thanks—I'll tell Dick. Better let me know it's all right before you go home."

She got out of the car at her own house and waved him good-bye. Then she went up to her room and sobbed herself to sleep, from sheer nerves.

From the moment Dick understood that he had one week in which to get well enough to go to Patsy's aid, he set himself to the task of being better. He was the most docile and obedient patient. He ate what they brought him, took the medicine they offered him. He

was very quiet. He lay for long periods of time, without speaking at all. Sometimes Joan's eyes filled with tears at the mark these long days had made upon him. The old boy Dick was gone, and this serious big-eyed man was a stranger.

He liked to have her with him, and his eyes followed her everywhere, when she was in the room. She sat beside him, his hand in hers; but he seemed not to want to talk. He sent Patsy a message in answer—

"Everything all right. Don't worry. I'll be there. Dick." After that he did not speak of him, or of the coming ordeal. He seemed to be concentrated on getting better.

Mrs. Rafferty could make him smile, with her joking, and he asked to see Jimmy, who was about again. But of Gregory he said no word.

"Joan, do I seem better today?" he asked each morning.

"Yes, dear, you do," she always answered.

The week was over at last, and the day of the trial at hand. Dick had walked a few steps about the house the day before, and he assured everybody that he was all right. Joan and Mrs. Rafferty took him in the town hack to the court-house, because neither Dick nor Mrs. Rafferty would accept a seat in the car Gregory offered them.

The entire district as well as most of the village was on its way to the trial. There had never been such an excitement in the town in the memory of the village Methusaleh. They all called out greetings to Dick, as he passed. He waved back to them.

"It's queer that a year ago I didn't know a soul in this town except a few store-keepers—"

"And now everybody round the place loves ye," remarked Mrs. Rafferty.

Dick patted her hand.

"Blarney!" said he.

The court-room was crowded to the door when they arrived. It was difficult for them to get to the seats reserved for the witnesses. Saunders, Mayor Ben Card and some of the militiamen who helped to arrest Patsy were already seated.

They were the witnesses for the prosecution. Dick seemed to be the only one for the defence. Grady came to rejoin them presently, however.

"Say—this is some show!" the saloon keeper remarked, as he looked about at his fellow citizens.

Joan saw Gregory come in quietly at back. He gave a long anxious look at Dick, who did not see him. Then he stood against the wall, as there were no more seats. Joan could tell from the expression of his face that he disliked being there. She saw, too, how the people stared at him.

The Court appeared. Then Patsy was brought in. He looked pale from his confinement, but he nodded and smiled at his mother and Dick and Joan, in his usual offhand way. He grinned at his friends, and evidently made some joke about the crowd to his guard, for that worthy laughed and nodded.

The case was called and the first witness for the prosecution called. Saunders took the witness seat. He testified to Patsy's general unreliability. He said he was a trouble maker, that he was always being fired, always up to some deviltry. He had been the ring-leader in getting the employés organized, in spite of the company's well known opposition to unions.

On cross-examination, he admitted that he was an expert workman, which accounted for the fact that he was always taken on again.

He was asked if he had any reason for thinking that Patsy would burn down the factory. He said he had every reason to believe it. He told of Patsy's effort to break up the factory machinery the night the strike-breakers were brought in. How he and another man were busily demolishing Mr. Farwell's property, when he, Saunders, who had heard the noise from his office, had crept up, upon them. When he tried to capture them, they fell upon him, and a third man had come to the rescue and struck him the blow that had knocked him out.

He was asked by Patsy's lawyer who the man was who worked with Patsy in destroying the machinery. Saunders could not tell—the light was bad, he was not sure. He was only certain that Patsy was the leader. He had not seen the assailant who knocked him out, but he believed him to be a very powerful man.

Patsy laughed aloud at that, Dick and Joan smiled, and the Judge rapped for order.

Saunders was dismissed and Ben Card called to his place. Card, being sworn in, proceeded to the destruction of any character which Patsy might be supposed to possess. He recited the story of how Patsy had led the factory workers to the Council meetings and tried to bribe him, the Mayor, with a promise of a solid vote, if he would get a public school established for the factory children in or near the district. Patsy had threatened him with political defeat, if he dared oppose him, and had actually tried to force the election of the opposition candidate, on the basis of his approval of the district school. He believed Patsy to be a dan-



gerous character, without principle or morals. What sort of a man was it, who could change his politics overnight, on the basis of a school for factory children? Fortunately, right and justice had triumphed and he had been re-elected.

The attorney for the defence inquired if the Mayor had made any promises of such a school to the factory men? He admitted that he had. Had he visited Mr. Rafferty at his house, just before Mr. Rafferty had offered the factory men's vote to the opposition candidate? The Mayor could not remember any such visit. The attorney asked permission to call a witness. It was granted. Mrs. Rafferty was summoned and sworn in.

"Did the Mayor make a visit in person to your son, at your house, on a day shortly previous to the election?" the lawyer asked her.

"He did, the durty, lyin' rogue!" said she, and the Judge's gavel quelled the outburst of laughter.

The attorney for the defence went on to bring out that Card had offered Patsy a bribe to come back into the fold and bring "the boys"—that failing in that, he had bought up as many votes as he could in the district. Witnesses were brought forward who testified to selling their votes, and told the price. In spite of promises and bribes, in spite of this notable triumph of virtue, no mention had ever been made since of the public school, guaranteed the factory men, by their trustworthy Mayor. He took up some of the facts in that gentleman's career and before he was reprimanded as being beside the case, he managed to instil the idea that Ben Card's testimony in regard to morals or character was nil, since he did not know the definitions of the words.

Next two militiamen were called, who had made the arrest. They described how they came upon Patsy stealing along, close beside the factory wall. He seemed to be calling somebody—probably his accomplice. When they saw him, he ran toward a broken window, in the basement, but they caught him. He made no struggle, nor objection, when they got him.

Cross-examined, they both admitted that he had nothing in his hands, or in his possession which could make, kindle, or cause a fire. He had not even matches. A subsequent search of the place where he was caught had not discovered any torch or rag, hastily thrown away. But the place was not searched until the next morning, and the fire had swept over it by that time.

During the entire recital of these stories, Patsy had sat, leaning forward slightly, in the deepest interest. Sometimes he smiled and glanced at Dick, or his mother. He certainly showed no signs of excitement. He did not act like a man facing a possible prison sentence.

When the court adjourned at noon, Dick's face was grey with fatigue. But he waved a friendly hand at Patsy as they led him away.

Joan induced Dick to lie down the minute he finished his lunch. She promised to sit beside him, if he would try to sleep.

"Dear, do you think you can go through with this?" she asked him, anxious over the black circles which shadowed his eyes.

"Yes. They are determined to prove it on him, aren't they?"

"Put it out of your mind and rest."

She laid her hand on his eyes to close them, and he clasped his two over it.

"Dear, it's worth being sick, to have you so good to me," he whispered.

"Foolish one, haven't I always been good to you?"

"Yes—but not so sweet. I love it," he said softly.

Joan flushed slightly and said in her most matter-of-fact tone,

"We're all spoiling you, little brother."

He frowned at that, and they did not speak again until it was time to go back to the court-room.

The crowd seemed even greater than before. The air was heavy and rather sickening. Joan saw Gregory's pale face across the room again. He smiled at her. The case for the defence began. Grady was called first. He kept the audience laughing by his witty answers to the prosecuting attorney. He reported Patsy as an honourable, honest, much beloved citizen. He was a good worker, a good son and brother, a loyal friend. He had the interests of the workers at heart. He paid his bills as promptly as necessary, and only got drunk occasionally. The way he concerned himself about the school for the children was an illustration of his good heart. He had no children of his own, so far as anybody knew, but he believed the kids had a right to an education, and he was willing to fight Ben Card and the whole damned Council to get it.

He was reprimanded for his language by the Judge—and he replied—

"Hell—yer honour—did I swear?"

He was allowed to proceed and he asked what reason Patsy could have for burning the factory down? If he had the interests of the workers at heart, would

he take away all their jobs? He had already got the hands organized, and they were just in a position to demand better conditions and wages. Why would he burn the factory and take away all wages?

He was followed by several witnesses who made tribute to Patsy's character and worth. The prosecuting attorney grilled them all.

It got hotter and hotter in the room, and it was getting late, when Dick was called upon. Joan looked at him anxiously—he was very white, and she saw the nervous way he wet his dry lips as he took his place in the witness box. That he was the star attraction was evident from the way the crowd fell quiet and strained forward to see and hear. Gregory closed his eyes, not to see the boy's face.

The prosecuting attorney began asking questions about Dick's acquaintance with Patsy. He answered briefly, described the trip they took together. Patsy had proved reliable, efficient, extraordinarily clever at getting at facts about the factories they visited.

"Why did you choose Rafferty to go with you on this trip?"

"Because I wanted him and thought he was smart."

"This was a business trip, from your point of view?"

"Yes. I wanted to study model factories. I didn't know anything about them and he'd been brought up in a factory."

"Was it to learn more about factories that you took a job in your uncle's?"

"Yes."

"Who aroused your interest in factories?"

"A—a teacher of mine."

"Did this teacher suggest your actually working in one?"

"No—that was my idea."

"Did you uncle offer no objection?"

"No—he laughed at the idea."

"Did he make any requests of you, in regard to your conduct in the factory?"

"Yes, he made me promise not to stir up trouble."

"You knew his objection to unions?"

"Yes."

"But you aided Rafferty in getting them established?"

"Yes."

"You deliberately broke your promise?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I saw it was the only way for the workers to get justice."

There was a ripple of applause, instantly hushed by a blow of the gavel.

"You thought the workers' rights were more important than the wishes of your guardian?"

"Yes."

"The strike was called because Mr. Farwell had you dismissed, wasn't it?"

"Yes. I warned him it would be called."

"You mean you threatened him with that fact."

"If you like."

"You weren't thinking much of his rights, were you?"

"No."

"You went to live with the Raffertys?"

"I did."

"You associated constantly with the prisoner?"

"He is my best friend."

"You helped resist the strike-breakers when they were brought in by the Company?"

"I did."

"Did you know that your best friend, as you call him, was trying to disable machines so that the strike-breakers could not work?" sneered the attorney.

"Yes—I helped him. It was my idea."

An exclamation ran around the room at that.

"You helped destroy your own uncle's property?"

"My uncle acts as guardian of the property, which was left to me by my grandfather. I shall inherit it in four years. I consider it my property."

A buzz and hum of talk began, interrupted by a sharp reprimand from the Court.

"Where were you the night the militia were brought in?"

"With the strikers."

"Were you at the station when they came?"

"Yes."

He closed his eyes a second, to shut that memory out.

"Tell us what happened there."

A haunted look came to the boy's white face, and he spoke slowly and with difficulty, at first.

"We were all in the lot, pestering the scabs, when a boy told us that my—that Mr. Farwell had ordered the Mayor to call the militia, to protect his property. So we all began to run to the station to meet the train. Everybody was there, the platform was full of men and women strikers, and all the other women of the district and the children. We weren't armed—it was an orderly crowd—we were just waiting."

He drew a long breath and the stillness in the room was intense.

"Just before the train came in, Card rushed up with some special policemen, all armed. He threatened us, if we made any trouble—he said he'd shoot. Then the

train came in and the militia got off. I was pushed up against the wall, and I stood on a bench up above the crowd.

"The militia formed and started to charge through. In the crowding that followed, somebody pushed one of Card's policemen. He whirled and aimed at Patsy who was standing right near him. Mrs. Rafferty saw it, she was behind him—and she hit his arm up. The revolver flew into the crowd, and the militia didn't wait a second. They began to shoot into the crowd. They shot the women and children—I saw Jimmy Rafferty shot down.

"They all screamed and pushed and there was blood—I saw it all—I knew my uncle had ordered that done—"

An exclamation—a gasp caught the audience. It seemed to Joan she was going to faint. She dared not look at Gregory—nor could she take her eyes from Dick. His face was flushed now, his eyes blazing. His voice was shaking and he fought for control.

"I didn't know what to do—I just knew I had to do something. It couldn't be like that in the world—killing people to protect property. It was my property and I hated it—these people they were trying to kill were my friends. I felt that my uncle had shot little Jim Rafferty—I felt I owed these people something. I had to show them that I didn't believe in this system." He was almost sobbing now, and the women in the court-room were crying.

"Keep to the point. What did you do, after the shooting?"

"I ran after the militia, trying to think what to do. Then I looked up and saw the bonfire the scabs had built to keep them warm. Then I knew." He paused

and then rushed on. "I went to Mrs. Rafferty's lean-to and got the kerosene can. I took a sheet off the line and tore it up and soaked it. I crawled around the factory yard and planted the rags and lit them, then I ran around and joined the strikers and watched it burn.

"I was glad it was burning—it was my property and I wanted to lose it. I can't let people work for me and live in dirty holes not fit for swine—I can't let people work for me in a factory that is a disgrace—I can't wait four years to get a chance to change all this—nobody would listen to me—Uncle Gregory didn't care—I had to make a clean sweep of it, and begin again!

"I've listened to you, trying to put the blame on Patsy—if it hadn't been for me, you would have framed it up on him and sent him up for the best years of his life—wouldn't you? He was willing to let you do it, to keep me out of it. I know now what kind of justice your rotten old courts deal in, and I'm willing to stand for whatever you can do to me—but, by God! I want you to know that I don't stand for any of your talk. Rights—morals—justice! There are no such things in the world! It's a hideous place—devils would be ashamed of such a hell! I burned up the factory, and I'm glad!"

His voice ended in a scream, and then he sank down, his head in his hands and sobbing hysterically.



## CHAPTER XXIX

**T**HERE was a hush of silence in the court-room, after Dick's recital, broken only by the boy's sobbing, and that of his audience. The Judge had permitted his story to be told in his own boy way, because he saw how ill Dick was, and how cross-examination fretted him. He had known the lad all his life, and he could not be blamed, if judicial precedent gave way just a trifle, to human concern for his overwrought young friend. He rapped for quiet, and addressed the jury.

"Gentlemen—the case of Farwell *vs.* Rafferty is dismissed. Having discovered the true offender through the confession you have just heard, we must now proceed to the indictment and prosecution of Richard Norton. The court will adjourn until ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

Before any one stirred, almost before the Judge had left the room, Gregory walked to the corner where his lawyer stood, and after a few words went out. A sudden hiss ran around the room. It was the only way the factory workers knew of expressing their hatred of the man. Gregory carried that sound away with him, punctuated by Dick's sobbing efforts to get control of himself. It seemed to Gregory that if he had been the devil Dick had painted him, if he had lived his whole life trying to do people harm, instead of just trying to keep away from them, no greater punishment could have been meted out to him.

Patsy, Mrs. Rafferty and Joan surrounded Dick and tried to get him quieted. The crowd surged up to offer congratulations to the Irish boy. He was well liked in the town. An officer of the court stepped up to Dick and informed him he was under arrest.

"Oh, but he's too ill to go to that jail, tonight," Joan said.

"I'm all right," Dick managed to say.

The prosecuting attorney joined them, and asked Dick and the officer to come into the Judge's private office. Joan watched them go, trying to keep control of her own nerves. She could not help Dick if she gave way to them.

"It's all right—don't worry," Patsy said to her, "he'll get bail all right."

The crowd in the room drifted off to form excited groups on the sidewalk and talk over the most thrilling event the town had ever staged.

Presently Dick and the officer came out again.

"It's all right, Miss. The Judge accepted bail. Take him home and get him to bed."

"Dick!" Joan exclaimed in relief.

"All right, honey—been pretty hard on you," he replied. Apparently he was too worn out to ask who furnished the bail, or to question it.

Patsy refused to ride in the hack. He walked along beside it, making jocular remarks about the age of the horse and his inevitable end in the glue factory. Dick smiled faintly, holding on to Joan's hand like a tired little boy to his mother. Once in the district all the children in the world seemed to appear, to hail them with shouts and to surround them until the shanty was reached. Dick refused to be put to bed. He was all right, just a little tired.

"I'm the boss 'round here yet, Dick. Ye'll take orders, as usual from me!" remarked Mrs. Rafferty, as she laid aside her best bonnet. He smiled at her affectionately.

"Ye'll lie down until we git the supper on the table, then we'll call ye. It won't be long, and ye can git forty winks mebbe. Forward march!"

He went protesting—but once on the bed he fell into the deep sleep of exhaustion. When Joan went to call him she hesitated to waken him. She summoned the others, and after some counsel they decided to let him sleep. They would keep his supper hot for him, and pretend to eat with him when he woke. They tiptoed back to the kitchen, not to disturb him, finished their meal, washed the dishes and put away the things. Still Dick slept on. They were all very tired from the strain of the day, and Mrs. Rafferty began dropping asleep in her chair. They persuaded her to go off to bed finally. Joan and Patsy would wait for Dick to waken. They talked on until ten o'clock. Then they stole in to look at the sleeper. He seemed not to have moved. He just breathed deeply and naturally.

"Do you suppose you could get his clothes off, and get him into bed without waking him, Patsy?" she whispered.

"It looks loike it—I'll try," he answered.

She went back to the kitchen, and after a while he joined her.

"Slapin' loike a baby. He niver opened an oye. Go along to bed, Miss—ye look half dead."

"I'll stay up a half an hour longer, I think. I can sleep on the sofa, if you'll take the nurse's bed in Dick's room, Patsy."

"All roight. I'll step over to Grady's fer a minute, if ye don't moind. Then we'll all turn in."

She nodded and he went off. She looked in on Dick, then she took up a book and tried to get her mind quieted. But it was no use—she was always back in the court-room, hearing Dick's bitter arraignment, seeing Gregory's racked face, hearing the hiss that followed him. Had she brought all this havoc into their lives for nothing? Were Dick and Gregory estranged through her, the factory burned down, the district out of work, because in her arrogance and youth she had thought she knew the correct formula to make everything come out right? What had she given them all in exchange? Her half-baked theories, her cocky college aphorisms; even the bitter and enlightening experience of Whiting, and her youth there, seemed to rise up and mock her in this, her darkest hour. Destruction—heart-ache—those were the words that said themselves over and over. Was there any more harm she could be responsible for?

There in the empty kitchen she pledged herself to give every power she had, every quality of heart and mind, to try to build up, to repair, to heal. If only it was not too late.

Patsy's step roused her. He came in quickly. She saw he was excited.

"What is it?" she asked.

"There's trouble at the saloon."

"What kind of trouble?"

"The Union distributed the last benefit today, ye know. The byes are discouraged, nearly desperate. They got to move on—find new jobs—they've all been drinkin' tononight."

"Yes, well?"

"They're all sore on King Farwell, ye know. He's the fella that's done it to 'em. They wuz at the trial an' heard what Dick said—they saw him walk out, not carin' a damn—"

"Oh, but Patsy, he did care! What are they going to do?" she cried breathlessly.

"I dunno. Grady was talkin' an' gittin' 'em all excited. His job is gone, too, ye know. I tried to shut him up—but they won't listen to me."

"But they must listen—they don't understand."

"They understand all roight," he interrupted, "only they won't get nuthin' by tryin' to fix Farwell, except hangin'."

"You don't think they'd—?"

"I tell ye they have ben drinkin'. I come to tell ye that I'd go 'long with 'em, if they start fer the Hall, an' try to kape 'em from murder, not fer his sake, but fer their sakes."

"Oh, Patsy, hurry. Don't let them start—let me go over there and explain to them—"

"No good. They don't care what *you* say, now."

"Patsy, if they do anything to Gregory—" she cried, and stopped short.

"So that's the way it is with *you*, is ut?" he challenged her. "Are ye on our soide, or are ye on his?"

"Can you ask me that?"

"How can ye know him, an' what he does, an' what he stands fer, an' care what happens to him? Why, even Dick has turned on him!"

"No, he hasn't. Dick cares for him too. Why he's been a father to Dick. We both see he's been wrong—he sees it himself. Give him a chance, Patsy—"

"He give us a foine chanct when he called the militia, didn't he," he sneered.

"Oh, Patsy, I haven't any reasons or arguments left. I just know Gregory is really a good man, and I ask you to help Dick and me save him, because we love him."

She laid her two hands on his arm in entreaty. There was a shout out in the street.

"Patsy—run—stop them!"

He rushed out, and Joan went after him, half way down the street. Then she remembered Dick and turned back. He lay still, in deep slumber. Should she wake him? She had called him back from a deeper slumber to help Patsy. Should she let him sleep through the urgent need of his oldest and best friend?

As if in answer, he opened his eyes and looked up at her. He smiled and a little natural colour came to his face.

"I was dreaming about you," he said. He lifted the hand she laid on his head and put it against his lips.

"Are you hungry?" she asked, marvelling that she could get the mundane words out.

"You bet. Have you had dinner?"

"Yes—it's late—eleven o'clock nearly."

"No? You said you'd call me. Why—who put me to bed?"

"Patsy. I'll get your supper."

She went out quickly, and stirred the fire, putting the things on to heat. Presently Dick came out. He was partially dressed, with a long heavy bathrobe on. He came up behind her and put his arms about her, leaning his head on hers.

"It's a shame to make you cook for me at this hour of the night."

She freed herself and went on about setting a place for him at the table.

"Haven't you been to bed yet?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"It's a perfect shame—" he burst out. "Is everybody else in bed?"

"All but Patsy," faintly.

"Where is he?"

"He—he—"

Her lips quivered so she could not go on. He laid his hand on her shoulder and turned her toward him.

"Why, Joan—"

"Oh, Dick, there's trouble at the Hall. Patsy has gone to try to keep the men in order. They want to—to harm Gregory!"

"Uncle Greg?" he said incredulously.

"They think you've turned against him, and I've turned against him, and they hate him so, anyway. Patsy says they've been drinking. Oh, Dick, I can't stay here and think about what they may do to him!"

"What do you want to do?"

"I want to go out there— I want to make them listen to me—I want to tell them that he didn't know anything about them—he didn't mean to hurt them—or—"

She caught her breath hysterically.

Dick looked at her closely, a new idea dawning in his mind.

"Joan, you mean you—Uncle Greg—?"

"I have to go to him."

"All right—we'll go. There isn't anything you can't ask of me, Joan, not even this. Give me that soup. Who can we get to take us out—I never could walk it—"

"Oh, not you, Dick. You aren't well enough to go—"

"Could you get Jake to hitch up something, while I swallow this hot stuff and finish dressing?"

"Yes."

She put her hat and coat on, as she ran. At the corner of the main street, a motor dashed past her, with Card and four of the men who had acted as special police during the strike. They were headed for the road to the Hall, and going at a great speed.

"Thank God!" murmured Joan as she turned into Jake's gate and began ringing his bell.

Twenty minutes later she clattered up to the shanty door, the old man driving. Dick and Mrs. Rafferty, in her wrapper, appeared at the door. The boy jumped in, and they started.

"Let the horse run, Jake. I'll get you a new one, if we kill it."

"Don't ye worry—*this* is a good hoss!" bragged the driver.

It was cold and very dark. The horse's hoofs beat on the road, a sort of rhythm, which Joan interpreted, "Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry up!" They scarcely spoke. Occasionally Dick leaned over to see that the robe was well wrapped about her, and when she lifted her white face to him in thanks, he patted her gently. It was a terrible ride for both of them. There were no signs of the strikers, no sounds of them.

By the time they reached the entrance drive to the Hall, the horse began to heave ominously.

"Stop, Jake, and let us out here," Joan said. "We can make it by a short cut. You wait here for us."

She was over the wheel and into the shrubbery in a second, Dick following as fast as his weak knees would



let him. They had often scrambled over this hill in the days when they had lived at the Hall. Joan ran as if she had owl's eyes, forgetting Dick, forgetting everything except Gregory's need of them. She could hear yelling and shouts. She plunged on and finally the great house came in sight—it was all dark save for one great lantern which hung over the carriage drive, and was always burning during the night.

A great yell of rage went up, just as she struggled to the terrace. She could see the crowd now. There was a small group on the piazza—one of them must be Gregory. She called to him, but she was so breathless that her voice did not carry. The crowd pushed up closer to the veranda—a window crashed—suddenly the small group straightened into a line, right arms were raised, the light of the lantern flashed on steel. Joan gave a despairing cry, as she reached the drive-way—they would not hear her—if the police shot, the strikers would kill him! Gregory heard her—saw her—he stepped in front of Card's men, shouting,

“Don't—don't do that!”

Joan got to the veranda—faced the surly crowd—struggled one choking second to get command of herself.

“Patsy—” she called.

“Here,” he answered.

“Dick is coming up the hill—he can't run. He asks you to tell the men to wait for him. He has something to tell them. You know how sick he is, boys, and this trip may kill him, but he had to come—he would come. Couldn't you go to help him—?”

She was fighting for time. Where was Dick? Gregory jumped off the veranda and started down the hill before any one had grasped his intention.

"Come on, fellows," shouted Card, running after him. Joan went too.

"Come on, boys, help Dick," she urged.

The crowd fell in behind her. Half way down the slope they came upon Gregory, carrying Dick in his arms. He never glanced at the mob, which had come to do him harm. His concern was for his nephew. Patsy stepped up to him quickly.

"Here, leave me help ye with him—" he said, laying hold of Dick's feet. They shifted the burden between them, and went on back to the house, with the sobered crowd following.

"Is he dead?" asked one of the men of Farwell. He shook his head, without any answer.

As they reached the veranda he stirred.

"Let's put him down a minute—" Gregory said.

In a second overcoats and sweaters were laid on the floor and they put him down. He drew a deep breath and opened his eyes.

"Hello, Uncle Greg," he said faintly, "where's Joan?"

At that the men lifted a shout of relief. He wasn't dead. He turned to the crowd.

"Hello, boys,—I came—to tell you—"

"Stand back there—give him air," commanded Gregory. They obeyed instinctively, pushing back into a wide circle. Joan knelt beside Dick.

"Don't talk, Dick, it's all right."

"I couldn't run—I fell down—" he explained to her. "Help me sit up—I want to speak to them."

She propped him up against herself as support.

"Boys, I ask you to go home now. This is my fight. I started it, and I have to finish it. There's going to be a new factory in Farwell—I want you all to stay—"

"He'll finish this speech some other time," Gregory interposed. "Take hold of his feet, Rafferty, and help me get him to bed."

Rafferty did as he was told, and without another word the little procession filed into the Hall,—Dick and his carriers, Joan, the deputies and Card. The latter closed the door carefully and stood guard by it. Upstairs to Dick's old quarters they marched. Patsy and Gregory began to get off Dick's clothes while Joan turned down the bed, and laid out pajamas from his old dresser. She went into his dressing room and waited. She heard an occasional word between them; she heard Dick groan as he sank onto the bed.

"Stay the night, Patsy?" she heard him say.

She went downstairs, told Card about old Jake and asked him to send the driver back to town.

"The crowd is still out there," Card reported, pointing to the lawn.

"No harm in it now," she replied.

"Ye just got here in time, I can tell ye," he remarked.

Patsy came downstairs.

"All right?" she asked him.

"All roight," he answered.

"Patsy, how can I thank you?" she said, her hand out to him.

"Ye can thank yersilf—I did nuthin'. There'd a ben hell to pay if ye hadn't shown up."

"They are still there—"

"I'll take 'em home. Mr. Farwell says for ye to take yer men back to town, Card. He's obliged to ye fer yer koind offices," he grinned. "Who tipped ye off?" he added.

"D'ye think I need a tip fer a yellin' mob headed fer the Hall?"

Card went to collect his men.

"Did ye put Card wise?" Patsy demanded.

"No—they passed me in a car, as I was running to get Jake—I didn't tell any one."

"Good— I'm glad av that. Well—good noight, to yez. *Ye're all roight!*" he added.

He went out. "Come on, byes; Dick wants ye to go home," he called to the crowd.

Card and his party followed. Joan locked the door after them, and slipped upstairs to Dick's room. There was a fire burning on the hearth. Gregory sat by Dick's bed, watching him. The boy was asleep.

At sound of Joan's step he rose and came to her, both his hands out. She laid her own in them.

"You've brought him home, Joan," he said, and there were tears in his eyes.

"No, Gregory, we brought each other."

"My dear—my dear—nothing matters except this—I've got you both back."

"Joan!" breathed Dick.

She dropped down beside his bed, and hid her face in his pillow. Gregory's hand came gently on her shoulder, and she could not move, so great was her content.

## CHAPTER XXX

MRS. CRADDOCK carried Dick's breakfast to him, herself. She reported him as all right, but that he did not wish to see anybody except the doctor. Joan did not appear and Gregory paced the house impatiently, waiting for her. He telephoned the doctor about Dick, and settled down to his papers, in a fine state of nerves.

Ben Card called up to ask if everything was quiet at the Hall, or if Mr. Farwell would like a couple of special police on the place.

"No—there's no need. How did you know about the trouble here last night?"

"One of my men watched Grady's saloon all the time. That's headquarters for 'em, ye know. When Grady got 'em filled up with booze an' excited with speeches, they started out to get you. My man got word to me—I jumped into a machine with my specials and beat it for the Hall, the long way, so I didn't pass 'em on the road."

"That was quick work, Mr. Card, and I'm greatly obliged to you. Another question—why did you call the militia?"

"Because I thought it was time to put a stop to that mob. It was gettin' bolder every minute. The town wouldn't stand for it."

"You did not have any appeal for such help from Larsen or any employé of mine?"

"No, sir. But my specials couldn't protect your property any longer against 'em—"

"I wish you had consulted me about that, Card. The strikers think I asked for the troops."

"It don't make no difference what they think! They wuz breakin' the laws an'—"

"Thank you. Good morning," said Gregory, briefly, hanging up the receiver.

Joan was standing on the hearth rug when he went back to the library. He paused at the threshold a second to smile at her.

"It is good to see you there, Joan Babcock," he said.

"Thank you, Gregory," she answered, with her heart beating in her throat.

"When did I begin to call you Joan?" he asked her.

"I don't remember. It seems as if you had always called me that."

"Did you sleep?"

"Yes—better than I have for weeks."

"It will take a long time to get you and Dick well again!"

"How is he?"

"Craddock says he slept—but he does not want to see us. I suppose I am the one he wants not to see," he added with a sigh.

"I wonder if I can ever help you to see and understand what has happened in Dick's mind? How he has come to blame you so bitterly?" she asked earnestly.

"I should be so grateful, if you would try, Joan. It has been very terrible for me, up here, alone."

"Oh, I know—how well I know! My thoughts have been up here with you so often, Gregory."

"My dear, how we have pulled you and tossed you about, since you came to us."

"I've suffered, too, Gregory, and learned."

"That goes for all three of us, then. Will you tell me something of what happened?"

"I think perhaps Dick would rather tell you himself. You know him and you'll understand most of it—but there is one side of him you do not know—because he never was aroused before. He hurls himself with absolute passion, into the thing that interests him. It is that way when you are with people who have wrongs," she said. "You see, every day, conditions which could be changed if anybody cared. They fairly smothered Dick, he had no training, no preparation—he cared like a child—without reason."

"I understand."

"You see, when I began to teach him something of modern sociology, I supposed that he would have four years of college training to ripen his judgment before he came to grips with actual conditions."

He nodded.

"The trip to the factories was all right. I agreed to that enthusiastically, you remember? But after he took the position in the factory, Gregory, I ceased to stand at the wheel. Events and passions caught him up—and they have nearly broken him, poor Dick."

She stopped to steady her trembling lips.

"He came to hate me, because the rest of them hated me? I never knew what hate meant until now," he said bitterly.

"And you care?" she asked him eagerly.

"Nobody wants to be hated like that!"

"Nobody need be, Gregory!"

The doctor was announced and came in for a few moments before he went up to Dick.

"You need a vacation, young woman," he said to

Joan, marking the circles around her eyes and her pale cheeks.

"I'll be all right when the strike is settled."

"Humph! She's done the work of three women, on little food and no proper sleep," he said to Gregory. "Women are awful fools, but I don't know what we'd do without 'em. I'll go have a look at that boy now."

He had broken the spell for them, and they talked casually until he came down again.

"Precious young idiot!" remarked the doctor.

"Is he worse?" Joan asked anxiously.

"He's nervously worn out, but he'll be all right, if he gets the proper rest. Ought to get away, out of all this excitement."

"Will he go away?" Gregory inquired.

"Probably not. He won't have a nurse—and he's got some cranky notion that he wants to be let absolutely alone for today and tomorrow. Better humour him, I think."

"Of course," Gregory agreed.

"Mrs. Craddock has orders about his food and absolute quiet may be the best thing for him in the end."

"No one shall disturb him," Gregory said.

"I'll come tomorrow. You keep out of the village for a day or two, young woman!"

"Sorry I can't do that. If Dick has gone into retirement, I must go back this afternoon."

"Can you do anything with her, Mr. Farwell?"

"No."

"There you are. Well—good day to you."

He bustled out.

"Why do you suppose Dick has shut himself off up there?" Gregory inquired.



"It's one way of getting yourself together. I think it's very wise of him."

"It is because he cannot bear to see me."

"Give him time, Gregory. He's only a boy, and he's been on the rack."

He went over to the window and turned unseeing eyes upon the brown and distant hills. Joan waited for him to speak, and a long silence fell between them.

"Must you go back today?" he asked finally.

"I think so. Mrs. Rafferty will want to bring the children home, I'm sure, and there will be much I can do to help her. She has been such a true friend to Dick and me that I know I can never repay her."

"Dick's troubles, Mrs. Rafferty's troubles—you look after everybody but me, Joan," he burst out at her.

She smiled at that.

"You don't need looking after. You aren't young and foolish, nor old and poor—"

"I'm unhappy and lonely. Isn't that enough?"

"I'm only just one person, you know. Won't it do, if I get around to your troubles later?"

"I suppose it will have to."

"I wonder when I shall get around to my own troubles?" she remarked.

He turned to her, all contrition.

"We are selfish brutes, all of us, aren't we? Joan, can't I help with your troubles?"

"Yes—I think you'll have to, Gregory, presently."

"May I say I am at your service entirely?"

"No matter what I demand?"

"No matter what you demand."

"Thank you."

After lunch she went off to the village. When Jer-

gens stopped the car at the Raffertys' door, Patsy came out to meet her.

"How's Dick?" he demanded.

"He's all right, but he won't see anybody for two days," she answered.

"How did you get him to go up there?"

"I begged him to—he saw that I meant to go."

"Is he goin' to stay?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen him."

Indoors Mrs. Rafferty turned at their entrance.

"So, ye've gone back, have ye?" she demanded.

"I went last night because I thought I could help Mr. Farwell. I stayed over night because of Dick. Here I am back," she answered simply.

"Patsy an' me can't understand where ye arr, in this foight. Furst ye're on wan soide an' then on the other."

"Because I know both sides, Mrs. Rafferty, because I know that right and wrong are on both sides."

"That ain't possible," Patsy broke in.

"Yes, it is, and that's what we working people have got to see before we can get things straightened out."

"Ye'll not teach it to the employer!" cried Mrs. Rafferty.

"Yes, you will—you've taught it to Dick."

"Oh—well, Dick—" Patsy said.

"Dick is employer class, and he knows now. He's lived down here with us and he understands our side. I've lived up there with Mr. Farwell, and I understand his side."

"What side has he got?" demanded Mrs. Rafferty.

"I wonder if I could make you understand? You know how Dick was when he came down here first. How everything surprised him and how the factory

made him sick? Well—if I had never gone to the Hall, Dick would probably never have known anything about this village. He would have gone off to college; when he became owner here, he would have left it to Saunders, while he lived in New York. Now, that's the way Mr. Farwell has been. No one made him take an interest in factories. He dislikes business and people—he has money enough to hire men to look after his interests—”

“But, he's got no roight—”

“Mrs. Rafferty, I'm not talking about rights, or duties, I'm only talking about how things *are*. I know him to be a kind gentleman, who would not deliberately hurt any one. I know he is not the devil you think him. He has been a good friend to me, and I've hurt him and upset his life, by leading Dick down here. Can't you see how dreadful it has been for him, during the strike?”

“Aw rats!” said Patsy.

“Patsy, you expect him to be fair to you, but you'd die rather than be fair to him! He loves Dick, and every minute of the riots and trouble down here, he worried about Dick's being hurt.”

“He could a-stopped it in a minute. All he had to do was call off the scabs and tell Saunders to take Dick back and recognize the Union.”

“All he had to do was to give up his way entirely and let us have ours,” she retorted. “I'm not saying he's a saint. Saunders told him unions made trouble and he believed it. He's got a right to object to Unions in his own factory, Patsy.”

“Aw, she's on his soide, why do ye argy with her?” said Mrs. Rafferty.

“That isn't fair!” cried Joan. “I only want to show

you that we've got to prove to him that unions are all right, that we'll deal squarely with him, if he does with us. We've got to work it out together. You see that, don't you, Patsy?"

"I see that we'll never git anything out of 'im that we don't take from him!"

"Do you feel that way about Dick?"

"No— Sure I don't."

"Are you willing to work with Dick, when he is owner?"

"Sure, we are!"

"That's the real point. Mr. Farwell doesn't count really. He loves Dick and I think he'll work with him, too. Dick is the real hub of the wheel."

"Dick's all roight," said Mrs. Rafferty.

Joan went to her and put her arms about her.

"Won't you say that about me, too? You and Patsy are the truest friends I have, and I can't bear to have you doubt me."

"Yer a noice gurl, but ye can't be on both soides," persisted the Irish woman.

"Will you trust me for just a few weeks, no matter what I do?"

"I will not!"

"Mrs. Rafferty—please?"

"Would you, Patsy?" inquired his mother.

"Sure."

"All roight then, but I don't!"

Joan kissed her and held out her hand to Patsy.

"Cut out the sentiments!" said he, ignoring it.

She laughed, and went to work helping Mrs. Rafferty, confident of their friendliness. She spent two days in the district, with only a telephone message from Gregory. The third day she went up to the

Hall. She must find out from Dick what he purposed to do for the men—because they were up to the last ounce of credit now.

It was the third day after his return to the Hall that Dick sent for Mr. Farwell. When Gregory entered the room he thought with a pang, that Dick's youth had gone. This was a man who faced him so gravely, and pointed to the chair beside his bed.

"I've taken these two days," he began without preamble, "to think things out, and now I want to talk to you."

Gregory nodded.

"I think I ought to tell you that I would never have set foot in your house again, except for Joan."

"Dick, why do you hate me like this?"

"If you had lived through what I have, you would know."

"I did not send for the militia—I did not know it was called, until I came to the fire."

Dick turned grave eyes upon him.

"Who called it, then?"

"Card, so he says. He was frightened about the mob. Nobody from the factory even suggested it—he admits that."

"You didn't do it!" Dick repeated.

Gregory shook his head.

"Would you have prevented it, if you could?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because of you and Joan."

Dick half rose on his elbow.

"You see—it's only what belongs to you that you care about!" he cried. "You don't care if little Jim

Rafferty and five men and one woman were shot at, and wounded."

"I don't care as I would if you or Joan had been hurt. How can I, Dick, I don't know them, or love them."

"You ought to know them, and whether you love them or not, you ought to have a decent human feeling for them."

"Shall we wait until you're stronger for this?"

"No—I'm all right."

"There are mistakes on both sides, Dick. You accused me of calling the militia, of actually shooting that child—we're none of us infallible."

"You sent the scabs, didn't you?"

"Yes—but I have a right to hire such men as I choose for the factory. Even you must admit that?"

"I don't admit it. Some of our men had worked for you five years. They had a right to be heard, before you put scabs in their places."

"Saunders runs the factory, Dick."

"But Saunders got authority from you—he wouldn't have dared act without."

"That's true—I agreed to it, on his recommendation."

"Besides you ordered Saunders to fire me."

"Just as you in turn, broke your promise to me."

"What was a promise against the good of a whole community?"

"You might have come to me with your belief that the men needed unions—you might have consulted me. After all, I am the head of that factory, even though I act only as your guardian."

"You would have laughed at me and shut down on the men."

"I got you the job on one condition—you broke the condition and I took away the job. It was fair and square, Dick."

"You've never been fair and square about anything connected with the factory!"

"Look here, my boy. I'm willing to make allowances for your state of nerves and for this experience you've been through, but I'm not going to stand for that sort of wholesale denunciation from you. I've had enough of it," blazed Gregory. "I may not have lived in the shanties with the workmen as you've seen fit to do, nor have I worked for a dollar a day in the shops, but I have engaged an honest, capable man to manage the business, and so far as I knew, he was doing it well."

"So far as you knew—there's the whole thing in a nutshell. It was your duty to know."

"Was it, now? Suppose I had lived in Europe during the time of your minority. When you inherited the plant would you have bitterly denounced me to the employés, because the conditions were not to your liking? Would you have asserted that my duty was to have left Europe and whatever I might have been doing there, to have come home and spent my life improving this property of which I was merely trustee?"

"It isn't the same thing. You were right up here on this hill—you drove through the village every day—"

"So did you. And you would never have seen it any more than I did, if Joan hadn't pointed it out to you. You aren't the perfect hero, Dick—you haven't found out everything for yourself."

"But Joan pointed it out to you, too, and you wouldn't look."

"After all, it's your job, Dick, not mine. It's of your era, and not mine. What do you wish to do now?"

"I've got to get my trial out of the way first."

"That can be arranged, no doubt. I sent word to the insurance companies that we would destroy the policies. You have inflicted a big loss upon yourself, Dick."

"I don't care about that—only I don't want the men to suffer."

"How do you expect to prevent it? You've taken away their jobs, what do you intend they shall do?"

"I want to build the factories over again, the new modern kind—"

"What are you going to build it with?"

"I should have to borrow the money."

"On what security?"

"The money that will come to me when I'm of age."

"It will take that and more to build the kind of place you mean."

"I don't care. I intend to make my living out of the factory."

"Are you going to run it yourself?"

"I haven't decided."

Gregory tried not to smile.

"Suppose this worked out the way you want it to, which is not by any means certain, it would take a year more to build the new plant. Do you intend to support the village in idleness for that length of time?"

"No—that's the most important part of the plan. I want to put all these men to work at once, helping to build the new factory, helping to build the new cottages. I want them to feel that it's their factory, their cottages. I want them to be a part of it, and



when I am the owner, I want them to own shares in the business. The one thing I've got straight in my mind is that we've got to work out labour and capital problems together," he ended, absorbed in his idea.

"But, Dick, these men aren't carpenters, or builders. How can they help?"

"We would have to hire a contractor and some skilled workers, of course, but our men could work under them."

"The unions wouldn't have it."

"I thought of that. There's a contractor in the village who would do it, and we'd hire all the carpenters and masons—they aren't organized—"

Gregory smiled but Dick did not even pause.

"It may be slow—but in the end, it will pay. I know it will work—but I suppose it sounds crazy to you."

"It doesn't strike me as being practical, I confess."

"Do you think I could get the money?"

"Um—probably."

"Would you prevent me?"

"I don't know—I should have to think about that."

"I never wanted to do anything in my life as much as I want to do this! I want to prove to them that we care about them—that we need them and their loyalty and their help!"

He spoke so earnestly, that Gregory was touched. He laid away his own hurt at Dick's attack upon him, in his innermost heart.

"What does Joan think of this plan?"

"I haven't told her yet. Have you talked to her?" he asked eagerly.

"A little. You said you came to my rescue the other night because she brought you—"

"She thought she could save you. She would come. I could not let her come alone."

Gregory looked at him directly.

"You love her, Dick?"

"She is the most wonderful woman in the world!" the boy answered softly, his eyes full of dreams.

"She has been with you every step of this fight—" Gregory said.

"Yes—all but her heart—" Dick murmured.

But Gregory's thoughts were too busy with their new content. Dick and Joan!

"She's older than you are, Dick."

"Does that make any difference when you love? She's younger than you are!"

"Well, of course—but I was thinking—"

"Has she told you about her—her love?" Dick urged.

"No—we have not spoken of it."

"Get her to tell you," he said.

"Shall I?" in surprise.

Dick nodded.

"I've made amends now," he said wearily.

"I want to think over your plan about the factory, Dick. I'll come back later in the day, and we'll discuss it again."

He started for the door—then came back.

"I wish we might let the past die, Dick. Can't we begin again? I've given you my affection so long that I cannot seem to stop all at once. Is friendship out of the question?"

Dick's big eyes gazed up at him, full of pain.

"Friendship? When I've given you—?" He shook his head faintly and turned his face to the wall.

## CHAPTER XXXI

**W**HEN Gregory came downstairs after his talk with his nephew he found Joan waiting for him. After their greeting she said, "How is our boy?"

"Joan, he's gone. He isn't a boy any longer."

"I've thought that, too, sometimes," she nodded.

"But Dick's youth will come back, Gregory, when he begins his real work. I never had any youth at all until I went to college, and you know how absurdly young I was, when I used to live here, long ago."

"It does seem long ago, doesn't it?" he answered.

"It was another decade in our lives."

"Can't we ever get it again? Can't we go back and live it once more? It was such a happy time!"

"Poor Gregory! We've pulled your life up by the very roots, Dick and I," Joan said ruefully.

"That's the thing to do with weeds, no doubt," he smiled. "You haven't forgotten how you used to lament my waste!"

"Did I? I've had my lesson, Gregory. No more rule of thumb for me—I'll never preach to you again."

"Oh, but I like it!" he protested.

"It's one of the luxuries you will have to do without," she answered him.

"If only life would stand still when it's happy and hurry faster when it's sad!" he exclaimed.

"I wouldn't change it, Gregory."

He walked about the room, hands deep in his pockets, head bent in a characteristic way of his which was dear to her. She closed her eyes and thought how glad she was to be there, in that quiet, soft-hued room, watching Gregory pace up and down.

"Dick has some wild scheme for the rebuilding of the factory," he said to her.

"Has he?"

"He tells me he has not talked to you about it, yet."

"No."

"I'm afraid you'll encourage him in it."

"You disapprove of it, then?"

"I don't know yet—I haven't thought it over. But it sounds utter nonsense."

"Do you think I always encourage him in utter nonsense?"

"By advice of counsel, I refuse to answer."

"Gregory," she challenged him, "you don't think these eventful weeks that have made a man of Dick and an old woman of me, are just nonsense, do you?"

"So far, I should have to answer yes. Five years from now, when I can look at Dick's accomplishment, and yours, then I may change that answer," was his grave reply.

"Gregory, how can you think that?"

He stopped before her, facing her directly.

"I see the factory in ashes, men and women of a whole district out of work, Dick almost a nervous wreck, under indictment as an incendiary. I see my former employes aroused to a pitch of hate and anger against me by my nephew, so that they want to kill me. I see the boy I have loved like a son, denounce me as a monster, in a public court—"

"Oh, Gregory—don't!" Joan begged.

"I see you, my friend, worn and pale and almost ill, from your part in scenes of violence and destruction. Is this nonsense, or has it all some purpose?" he demanded.

"Oh, Gregory, it has purpose—it's *got* to have," she said with passion.

He turned away.

"I hope so—it has cost me pretty dear," was his answer.

"And Dick—and me," she added softly.

"Oh, yes—but you have love," he said.

She lifted a startled glance to him, but he was pacing again, head down. She dismissed the idea—he had meant that the village loved Dick and herself, in distinction to its hate of him.

"Yes, Gregory, but even love isn't enough."

"Isn't it?"

"No—we must build, where we've torn down, or it is what you call it—nonsense."

"Go get Dick to tell you his plans. He does not know you're here," he said.

She rose and paused a moment beside him. She laid her hand on his arm.

"We want to rebuild what we've torn down in your heart, too, Gregory."

"Thank you, my dear—if you let me share your lives, perhaps—"

She went swiftly out the door and at the top of the stairs she stopped to still the beating of her heart. He looked upon her as the destroyer of his life—he was trying, but he could not forgive her. It was only for Dick's sake that he tolerated her presence. She braced herself, and stepped to Dick's open door.

"May I come in?"

He turned a troubled face toward her, and it flooded with pleasure.

"Joan, I didn't know you'd come!" he cried.

"I've been in the village, looking after things a bit."

She sat beside him, with her hand in his.

"How are they all? What is the news? It seems as if I'd been away, laid off in this room for years."

"They are all relying on what you said about a new factory, Dick, but they can't hold out another day without help. The village store-keepers have shut down on credit."

"I'll have to arrange about that," he said, with an anxious frown. "I had to get my mind clear about the whole thing, first. It's quiet here and I can think. I see it all now, Joan, as clear as crystal."

"Do you, Dick? Tell me."

He began to explain the idea, only this time, being sure of her understanding and sympathy, he poured out his very heart to her, his hopes, his fears, his trust in the workers, and his belief that all working together they could make Farwell a big, happy co-operating community.

As he talked, as he developed the plan for her inspection, he sat up, his eyes shining, his face flushed. To Joan he seemed the voice of the future—the ardent young leader of the new era. Here was the justification Gregory sought for!

Her head went down on the bed, and great big uncontrollable sobs shook her body. Her nerves were too tired to bear anything more. Dick could not understand at all, he had relied so on her support! He took her into his arms and held her very gently, touching her hair with his hand, with his lips, as her head lay on his breast, and her sobs shook them both.

"My dearest—my blessed Joan—what is it? Can't you tell me?" he asked her over and over, but she did not hear him, she was not conscious of his touch, she was so shaken with the nervous storm of tears.

Little by little she got control again. Suddenly she felt Dick's arms about her. She lifted her face to make some excuse for herself, when his lips sealed hers, his kisses were on eyes and cheeks.

"Joan—Joan—"

She drew herself resolutely away and got to her feet, forcing an hysteric laugh.

"My dear—I don't often go to pieces like that, and have to be petted back to sanity."

"Joan—I—"

"Wait a minute, a little cold water will help—"

She hurried into his bathroom to bathe her eyes and presently she came back to him.

"Joan—I—"

"It was nerves, Dick, nothing else. The plan made me so happy and so proud of you, that I went to pieces. Let's forget it! I think you've hit upon the crux of the whole thing, Dick, if we could only work out the practical details," she said, in her most business like tone.

"I want to talk about you—" Dick said softly.

"No—I'm all right. Now, what schemes have you thought of for financing it? Mr. Farwell seemed to think the whole thing was very impractical," she began.

"Yes, he would think so, because he doesn't see the idea. We've got to convince him, or we can't pull it through—because, after all, he is my guardian. Couldn't you manage him?"

"No, of course not. Tell me what you told him."

He went over it all again. Here and there she

made a good suggestion, or criticized a point. They argued and discussed, step by step, with no thought of time.

Presently Gregory appeared at the door.

"I heard voices going on and on— Is it a debate?"

"I'm telling her about my scheme—and she's telling me what she used to dream about the new place. Tell him," Dick said.

Joan smiled up at Gregory.

"Some days when Farwell was just unbearable, I used to escape into a Farwell I made up."

"Where was it?" he inquired.

"It was a mile out of the present town," she answered. "There is a spot in the valley where I used to ride, about six or eight miles of green, watered by a stream—I always saw the big, sunny factory there, with its hundreds of windows, like eyes to look out with, on the hills around. Then, on those hills were the cottages for the workers, pretty modern houses, with porches, and flower and vegetable gardens. There was a school, and maybe a church, in my dream village. It was peopled with busy, contented people."

Gregory's puzzled look went from one eager face to the other.

"It wasn't so utterly impractical, Gregory," she assured him, "because a half-mile track could run to this place easily from the main railroad, so the shipping would be as direct as it was in the old place."

He smiled at that.

"It wasn't the shipping that worried me. It was the people. How long do you think it would take those filthy squatters to make your new village as bad as the old?"



She shook her head.

"They don't *choose* to be like they are, Gregory. They don't know any better. They would have to be taught, of course. But wouldn't it be worth while to raise them a whole class in the scale of living?"

"Would it?" he inquired—then at their hurt expression, he added quickly—"I suppose it would."

"I think it's a great idea, Joan," Dick comforted her.

"There weren't any saloons or picture shows in your dream village," Gregory remarked.

"There's a club house, with a bar, if they want it!" she flashed at him and laughed.

He laughed, too.

"Billiards and pool?" he teased.

"In time—yes."

"Well, well!"

"It's all been done in other places," Dick said impatiently. "It's only here in the back woods that we cling to the Middle Ages."

"Don't go too fast for me, Dick. I belong back there, you know. So you think this scheme would work out, you two unconquerable idealists? You think such a factory would make a living for a man of Dick's tastes?"

"Yes," Joan answered.

"It will cost a great deal of money," Gregory suggested.

"I'd be willing to lose it, in the experiment," cried Dick.

"Would you support him in that madness, Joan?" Gregory asked her.

"Yes, a thousand times, yes. Why, if that village

should come true, and Dick could work out a big co-operative plant, I'd feel that Dick and I were justified."

Gregory shook his head again. He took a turn across the room and brought up at the foot of the boy's bed. He looked at their eager, flushed faces, and all at once his whimsical smile flashed out at them.

"The times are out of joint—O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set them right," he said ruefully. "The information that I came to impart is this, that I am going to New York tonight. Can I do anything for either of you?"

"What would you think of my telling the stores to give the men credit, until you make up your mind about the factory, and I can get some information about the building myself?"

Gregory considered that a moment.

"Give them credit for a week—by that time we ought to know what we're going to do."

"All right. Much obliged."

"By the way, I've decided not to prosecute the incendiary. I've directed my lawyer to tell the judge that we are going to settle out of court. I think you've invented a new crime, Dick."

"Thanks for getting me off. If you two will get out, I'm going to get up," Dick said.

"Oh, wait till tomorrow, Dick," Joan urged.

"Nope. Too much to do. I'll be down in ten minutes. Will one of you call up Patsy, and get him out here?"

Joan nodded and she and Gregory left him.

"You want to see him put this through, Joan?" he asked her again.

"Oh—so much!"

"I'll be back in a day or so. You two stay here, won't you?"

"I can't promise for Dick."

"Try to persuade him. You must not let him shut me out of your lives, Joan."

"He couldn't," she said simply.

"Love is selfish, sometimes," he replied. "Good-bye for a day or so. Suppose you wish me luck."

"Gregory, I always do."

"Thanks. I'm glad of that."

Patsy was summoned by Joan and in due time, arrived. He found his two friends at the library table, with every picture and pamphlet and note book collected on the famous factory tour, spread out before them. They greeted him enthusiastically. He cast a quick, inquiring look at Dick, before he said,

"Well, what's on yer moinds?"

They both began to tell him at once—both stopped to laugh.

"You go first, Dick," Joan said.

"Well, first, my uncle will give the men credit for a week," Dick began before he started off on his project. Joan watched them. The expression played over Patsy's mobile Irish face, like an electric storm. He interrupted now and then with a terse question. His mind concentrated on every word Dick said.

"Now, you tell your part, Joan," Dick urged finally.

So she took up her idea of the new site, and she painted again its possibilities. He nodded, sometimes laughed. Dick hurried to forestall any criticism, as she finished.

"Isn't that great?"

"If the railroad spur is practical, it's all roight, but

them picture card cottages is hard fer me to see, after the old shanties. I was thinkin' av Aaron Kovlatski a-settin' on his stoop, wid the ole woman an' the kids wit' shinin' faces all round 'im. Flower gardens an' vegitibles—can yez see that picture, Dick?"

"It won't all happen in a minute, of course. Joan knows that—she's going to teach them how to live in a new way."

"All roight—cut out the sob stuff! I'm fer the idea, picture card cottages an' all! It's foine!"

"Now, let's get down to hard pan. We haven't gone over this stuff for a long time, Pat. Let's pick out the things we wanted."

They all went to work, marking and sorting. Gregory looked in on them, from the door, but they did not see him. He went away without interrupting them, carrying with him a vision of their absorption in their task.

Finally dinner was announced. A veritable struggle followed, to induce Patsy to stay. But in the end, they won, and Dick bore him off to his room to wash his hands. The dinner went off fairly well, thanks to their intense interest in what they were discussing. Patsy almost laughed aloud over the man-servants, and some of the events of the meal. But he followed Dick's lead as to forks and such details, and managed to make a very good meal, although he suspiciously inquired "What's this?" about each dish.

Later they talked over the details of the plan. Patsy was full of practical suggestions, which opened up new avenues for thought. He knew which of the men had had any experience in other trades, he knew the situation in the town in regard to builders and carpenters. It was a slack season for them, and if the new work

could be got under way shortly, they could hire them all.

"Our end av it can be organized all roight—it's your ind I'm leery of!"

"Why?"

"If King Farwell says no to the idea, that settles it."

"But he hasn't said it!" Dick exclaimed.

"Believe me—he *will* say it. 'It's too big a risk fer yer money, Dick'; that's what he'll tell ye. An' mebbe he's roight, too," he added.

"We've got to make him see it, that's all," Dick urged. "You both got to help me."

"'Tis a lot av help I'd be to ye. 'An' what's yer idea, Misther Rafferty?' sez King Farwell to me."

"Don't you worry—he listens to ideas," Joan objected. "Think how he's listened to mine."

Midnight came upon them, and they were not half talked out.

"Take Patsy off to bed, Dick," Joan counselled. "Think of the years of talk and work and pleasure ahead of us three, if this dream comes true."

Patsy made a feeble protest at spending the night, but Dick bore him off triumphantly. Calling back their goodnights to Joan, they sauntered off arm in arm.

The next day they all three went to the village. The boys were to attend to the credit for the men and their families; then they called on the contractor and had a long interview. In the meantime, Joan sat in conference with Mrs. Rafferty. The three conspirators had decided that she was the only one to be taken into their councils, until the scheme was far enough along to be outlined to the whole community.

Joan knew she could rely on the Irish woman's experience and her common sense.

She proposed her scheme for trying to arouse the women to new standards of living, developing it at great length. The older woman sat and listened.

"It listens good, gurl, but ye know about the old dog an' the new trick. If ye're born doin' things one way an' brought up to do 'em that way, it ain't so aisy to learn the new ways, even if they do tell ye they're better!"

"I don't expect it to be easy; if the old ones can't learn, the young ones can. If we could get a kind of contest in good housekeeping started, they would find out how much more comfortable it is to live decently."

"Well, ye can but try. If ye can teach them durty Kovlatskis to live decent, an' some av thim other Polacks, I'll believe ye can do annything!" laughed Mrs. Rafferty.

"Will you help me? I can't do it without you."

"Go on wif' yer blarney!"

"It's the truth. They all look up to you, and if you were back of the idea, it would take."

"Me the leader av the house cleanin' brigade! Would I have to be takin' a bath ivry day?"

Joan laughed.

"I s'pose I'd have to kape wan av the kids in the tub all day, to show thim Kovlatskis that it ain't the coal bin."

"How would we go about getting the women interested?"

Mrs. Rafferty considered that for a while.

"If they got the place settled on in the next two months, ye could start the wimmen to makin' the gardens. The Polacks is all good at that, an' the Eytalians. Ye could git the kids in on that, too."

"That's a good idea! Then we could start them

on the houses later. If they see them grow, from the ground up, they can't help but be fond of them, and want to be clean and nice."

"Well, we'll see," remarked Mrs. Rafferty, her tone indicating doubts.

"You think about it, and so will I. Then after the plan is announced, we'll call a meeting of the women and all talk it over. We can form clubs for things, sewing clubs, cooking clubs, garden clubs. Then we can get up children's clubs, too."

"Well, darlin', don't wear yer brains out until ye git King Farwell's answer," warned Mrs. Rafferty.

"I think we're going to see the new village on the way to completion, one year from today!" said Joan.

"Wait till ye're an old settler, loike me, Joan! I've seen things go from bad to worse fer tin years in this town. Ye got to show me how King Farwell lets Dick spind anny money in a model village fer us workers."

"Dear Mrs. Rafferty—nothing stands still—this thing is going to happen."

The boys came back full of information gleaned from the contractor. He had told them about a young architect, just now trying to get a start in the town. His name was Betts, and he had taken his training in New York. From the contractor's office they went to see Betts. They told him their scheme and fired his imagination. They were to send him their material collected on the trip, with their own ideas indicated, and he was to have a rough plan drawn up, so that if the scheme went through, there would be something tangible to show to the men. The boys were wildly excited about this latest discovery.

"We want the town to do it," Dick said. "We want it to be a great big family party."

"Don't count yer chickens until King Farwell is hatched," laughed Mrs. Rafferty. "You kids make me smile."

Just then Jergens drove up in the big car.

"Did you tell Jergens to come for us?" asked Joan.

"I did not," Dick replied.

Jergens came to the door.

"Excuse me, Miss Babcock, but Mr. Farwell has come home and he wants to know if you an' Mr. Dick will come out to the Hall? He wants to see you about somethin' partic'lar."

Dick looked at Joan.

"We'd better go. It may be something about the money."

They hurried off with Jergens. Gregory met them at the door.

"I thought I would better send for you two," he began at once, "and let you know what I found out in New York."

They grouped themselves around the fire in his den.

"Is it about the money?" Dick asked anxiously.

"Yes. I went up to have a talk with my lawyers and with the bank."

"Can we do it?" Dick demanded.

"The money can be raised, I think, so far as that is concerned," Gregory began.

"Thank the Lord!" exclaimed Dick.

"But nothing can be done, as you know, without my full consent—"

Dick nodded impatiently.

"I think the idea of using the men to build the factory impractical—I think changing the site is a mistake—"

"But—"



"Let me finish, Dick. If you sink your entire patrimony in this scheme, what is to become of you?"

"Don't you think I can earn a living?"

"How?"

"At a carding machine, if necessary," hotly.

"As I understand it you consider your education completed, so far as college goes?"

"I might go to college after we got the factory well started," Dick said.

"I should have to make that a stipulation, if I agreed to your plan for rebuilding, Dick. If I let you risk your inheritance on this venture, you must at least be protected by an education."

"All right—I'd accept that condition."

"You understand that it may beggar you?"

"Yes."

"You want him to take this risk, Joan?"

"I cannot advise him on this, Gregory."

"Why not? It's your affair, too."

"Mine?"

"I don't need advice—I take full responsibility," cried Dick.

"The matter is in your hands, then."

"You mean it? You'll agree to my plan?"

"I authorize you to go ahead."

Dick seized his hand and wrung it.

"You'll never be sorry, Uncle Greg," he promised.

"Joan—Joan—we've got our chance!"

She put her hand in the one he stretched out to her, but her eyes were all for Gregory.

"Oh, I'm very proud of you!" she said to him softly.

## CHAPTER XXXII

**T**IME did not lag for Dick, once he knew that he was to be free to rebuild the factory. A meeting was called of Mr. Farwell's lawyers, Patsy, the architect, Betts, the contractor and Mr. Farwell. They went over the plan in detail. Then they went to the new site Joan had chosen, and considered it from every point of view. Dick was determined to have it on that spot, if it could be managed, even if the initial expense were greater. The contractor agreed with Gregory that it was all sentimental bosh about giving the workers a pleasant outlook, and said so.

"You march up and down a day or so, at a cotton carding machine, with nothing to look at, and you'll learn a thing or two," replied the boy.

"You'll have 'em gawkin' off at the hills, instead of payin' attention to the job," the contractor objected.

"Let 'em gawk!" retorted Dick.

There were infinite details to take up—the practicality of the railroad spur, and its cost, was only one. Two weeks was consumed in these preliminaries, with Gregory a reluctant victim to Dick's enthusiasm. The boy could neither sleep nor eat, so consumed was he with this plan. He could argue against them all, and win them over often, by his very fervour of conviction. He found a loyal supporter in Betts, who was moved by enthusiasm as well as ambition. Patsy and Joan frequently opposed him—Gregory rarely made any sense out of what he called his "mad notions," but Betts stood by.

When the plans had reached the point where the scheme was assured, Dick proposed to his uncle and Joan his idea of the way to break the news to the workers.

"I'd like to ask them all up here. Most of them have never seen the Hall, and they've been awfully friendly to me, while I've been sick and all—"

"Good Heavens, Dick! You mean to let them track all over the house?" protested Gregory.

"It won't hurt the house! They'd like to see it, and after all, Uncle Greg, they help pay for it."

"O Lord—am I to be fed on this sort of talk till I die?" moaned Gregory.

"If you feel that way about it—we won't discuss it, of course. I'll get them together in the village," said Dick haughtily.

"Look here—I've accommodated myself to your ideas enough, Dick. I'm not going to have that army of dirty labourers and their kids swarming all over the place. Do you think I'm called upon to do that, Joan?"

"Not at all, if you feel that way about it. Dick and I look upon these people as our friends, so we don't get just your point of view about them."

"Well, go ahead and have them. I'll go to New York for a couple of days and Craddock can get the house cleaned and fumigated before I come back," he said shortly.

"Much obliged," said Dick coolly. "Would it be convenient for you to go on Friday?"

"Dick, I don't think we ought to accept it," Joan protested.

"Friday suits me perfectly," remarked Gregory with finality.

Gregory opened a book, while the other two fell to discussing the party. They agreed upon the refreshments and where they could be served. Should they have them in the big drawing-room, or the hall?

"Dick," exclaimed Joan. "I have it! Let's have them in the garage."

"The garage?"

"Yes. Take out the cars—put chairs in that great huge hall, with refreshment tables in the room they call the repair shop."

"And not let them come into the house at all?"

"After all, Dick, they don't care so much about the house. The thing is to be invited out here. And Gregory is right about dirty feet—then, too, the children might break things. I believe the garage is just the thing."

"Well—all right. I don't care," said Dick.

"Much obliged, Joan," remarked Gregory.

Dick and Patsy delivered the invitations, dropping a hint that important business was to be discussed on the occasion, and urging every one to come, including the children. Wagons and motor cars would carry out the women and the youngsters, but the men would be expected to walk. The hour was three in the afternoon. Dick made it clear that he was giving the party. When they asked him if King Farwell would be there, he said he did not know, that he had invited him, but had had no answer so far.

Mrs. Rafferty was commandeered to help get ready the day of the party. She came out early in the morning, bringing Jimmy, in the big motor car.

"Think av me a comin' to the Hall in wan av thim divil wagons!" she laughed.

They all began work at once on the garage. It was

emptied of its cars, clean as a hospital and warm. Joan and Dick had cut great boughs of cedar and spruce to hang on the walls, and they put huge jars of flowers on the tiny improvised stage. The town undertaker had supplied the chairs.

Mrs. Rafferty, Craddock and Annie set up the commissariat department in the room off the main hall. Everybody was busy, and happy, when Gregory looked in on them.

"Well, Dick, how's your coming-out party progressing?" he inquired.

"Fine. I hope you're coming?"

"I think not, thanks. Debuts are always depressing to me."

He watched Joan working with a spruce bough.

"Come and help—" she called to him.

"No, I don't like to help," he answered.

"I thought you were going to New York," she smiled.

"I may. There is still time."

Later they had a picnic lunch, not to embarrass the Raffertys. It was a happy meal, with much banter. Joan was sorry that Gregory missed it. He was lunching all alone in the big Hall dining-room.

She hurried off for a little rest, and a chance to dress after the picnic. About two o'clock the first guests began to arrive. The men were starting early evidently. Dick and the Raffertys were there to receive them, so Joan took her own time. A little after three she went downstairs. Gregory stood in the hall window, watching the procession of arrivals.

"Aren't you coming, Gregory?"

"Must I?" he asked her.

"Only if you want to."

"Farwell is certainly coming up the hill, just as you said it would," he commented.

"Are you sorry?"

"I suppose so. I don't want them here. They don't belong here."

She sighed.

"Come out and hear Dick's speech, Gregory," she urged him.

"Do you want me to come?"

"Yes."

"Then I will."

She smiled and went out to the garage. The workers were all there. Men in their Sunday clothes, women in their best, the children painfully clean. They were all self-conscious and miserable. Joan hurled herself upon the task of making them comfortable. All the men were in one corner, the women in the other. Stupid looking, stolid folk, they were. This was the stuff for Dick's experiment. How dreadful it would be if they failed him! What if this scheme, with its cargo of high hopes, should go on the rocks? Suppose the workers were not ready? She caught herself up short. Was she, Joan Babcock, concerned with Dick's happiness, or with new opportunities for her people?

She started the children at games, and got Mrs. Rafferty to help her with the women. They thawed a little under their combined efforts. Presently Mr. Betts and the contractor arrived. He carried a huge roll of papers and the contractor bore a leather bag. After they were greeted and passed around among the men, Dick and Patsy marshaled them into the chairs.

They were all excited, you could see by their expres-

sions. You knew the mothers were nervous because they cuffed the children for the least thing. Dick stood up on the platform and faced them all. The room was very full. The house servants were at the doors, and Joan thought she saw Gregory come in a rear door. But she forgot everything when Dick began to speak.

"People—I've asked you all to come up here to talk over a plan I've got to rebuild the factory. I know you are all my friends, because you were good to me, when I was sick at the Raffertys'. I hope you know that I'm your friend—"

"Sure! We do!" they answered him, in a shout.

"I don't want to make a speech—because I can't and besides there's so much business for us to talk over that there isn't time. But I want to say this. I never would have known anything about the factory, or about you workers, or how you lived or anything, if it hadn't been for Miss Joan Babcock. She taught me something about industrial problems that set me to thinking."

"Hurrah for Miss Babcock!" shouted Patsy, and they all joined him.

"Then she introduced me to the Raffertys, and that settled it."

"Three cheers for the Raffertys!" yelled the men, whereupon Patsy dragged his mother to her feet and they bowed, to the tune of much laughter.

"They are the finest people in the world, the best friends a fellow could have," Dick went on. "They taught me more about the workers' needs. Then you know how I took a job in the factory—"

"Sure we know—"

"I want to say right here, that my uncle did not ap-

prove of that, but he let me do it, on the promise that I would not stir up trouble—”

A laugh greeted this.

“I don’t wonder you laugh. But since I broke my word to him, he felt that he had a right to take away the job.”

“Aw—”

“No—don’t interrupt. You all know what happened later. I lost my head, when the militia shot at us, and burned down the factory. I didn’t have a very clear idea of what I was doing, but I’m afraid I wanted to get even with my uncle for calling out the troops—”

“And right you were, too.”

“But he didn’t call out the troops.”

“Who did, then?” shouted Grady.

“Ben Card. He had sent word to the Governor the day before, that there was trouble here, and he telegraphed him finally, without ever asking my uncle about it.”

A buzz and hum of comment followed that.

“So you see, I was all wrong in what I said that day at the trial, and I want to square it. If you fellows had done anything to my uncle that night, because of what I said, it would have been awful!” he added seriously.

“Well—we didn’t,” said somebody.

“No, you didn’t. Ever since that night I’ve been trying to think how I could fix up some of the trouble I started, and I’ve got a way now, and that’s why you’re all here.

“We’re going to put up the new plant half a mile out of town, in a place picked out by Miss Babcock. She wants you to have sun and fresh air and green country—”



He paused for some applause for Joan, but his audience was too absorbed now for any manners.

"We're going to build the most up-to-date factory in this country, on that spot, and the new cottages will be on the hills around it—"

A great shout went up at that. Mr. Betts jumped up on the platform beside Dick, tearing the paper off a packet. He held up a watercolour of the factory, with the hills beyond. Dick was completely taken by surprise. He had no idea that Betts would work day and night to have this ready.

"Oh!" he said, and again, with a choke in his throat —"Oh!"

He held it and gazed at it—then his eyes flew to Joan—it was her dream, too. She smiled back at him. He held the picture up so they all could see it, and they sprang up and crowded forward to get a better look.

"This is the type of cottage," called Betts, holding up another watercolour. It showed a simple type of house, English cottage architecture, set in its own garden. They exclaimed and clapped their hands at that.

"They'll be called the Babcock Cottages," cried Dick, and they went off again in applause, and cheers.

"Sit down now—and Mr. Betts will show you a big chart of the whole thing."

Betts hung up his map and explained it carefully. You could have heard a whisper, they were so silent.

"Do you get the idea?" Betts asked.

"Sure!" they answered.

"How long will it take to build?" asked one man.

"A year or more," replied Betts.

"Hell—how can we live?" exclaimed another, so absorbed that he did not know he swore.

"That's the next step," said Dick. "You're going to build it."

They stared at him and waited.

"I want you to build a factory with me, and run it with me. I can't afford to keep you all here, idle until the shops and cottages are finished, so I'm going to hire you to build it.

"Hold on, Dick, we ain't no buildin' trades."

"I know, but Jim Doherty here has been a contractor a good many years, and he's got a plan to use every one of you boys. First we are going to haul native stone for the foundations. We've got all the labour in the town hired, and we want to begin at once—"

"Is King Farwell payin' the bills?"

"No—I am. He is letting me use every cent I would inherit at twenty-one, to try out this experiment. You fellows and you women have got to help me make it go."

They shouted some more at that. Patsy stepped up beside Dick.

"I ain't chosen no spokesman fer this occasion, so far as I know, but I jest appoint myself a committee av one to tell Dick that if this here plan av his fails it ain't goin' to be because the men an' wimmen av the Farwell factory didn't do their part."

They agreed with him vociferously.

"Dick is offerin' us the chanct av our lives, an' we're goin' to make good fer him jest to show him an' Mr. Farwell what we *can* do. He's the best little feller ever, an' we know it."

The applause was deafening.

"Much obliged. Now I think Miss Babcock ought to say a word to the women workers."

They clapped and called for Joan, who came to the platform smiling, to receive an ovation.

"Comrades—this is a great occasion to me. I think when employers and employés get to be friends, with a common interest, as you and I and Dick are friends, there will be an end to most of our industrial problems. I just want to say to the women that while the men are busy putting up the buildings, there will be much for us to do. We thought that while the men haul stones, we would begin the gardens. If we get them planted this spring, they ought to be in good condition next spring, when we've all moved into the new houses."

This suggestion was enthusiastically greeted by the women.

"Mrs. Rafferty has more ideas than I have about our part of the work. Maybe she will tell us some of them."

Loud shouts arose from all sides for Mrs. Rafferty, and she stepped forth, shaking her fist at Joan.

"Neighbours," she began, "I'm an awful talker, but no spache maker. I think it was a great day fer us in Farwell when Dick and Joan came down there an' got acquainted with us. We been thro' a lot of trouble togither since thin, an' we're moighty glad to be lookin' ahead to good days.

"It'll be an awful change from thim shanties to the new cottages, an' I hope none av us'll die from ut. An' if they won't make 'em too iligint, we'll try to live up to 'em—ain't that the truth?"

They laughed and applauded her. As she sat down, Dick caught sight of Mr. Farwell.

"Hi, there, Uncle Greg," he called—"we'd like to hear from you!"

Gregory frowned, as they all turned startled faces

toward him. Then he shrugged his shoulders and stepped up before them.

"My nephew has a passion for playing impresario, it seems. I haven't anything to say. I think this whole idea is ridiculous, but if he wants to risk every cent he has in the world on you, why I'm not going to stop him. But if he loses everything it will be up to you to take care of him, because I don't propose to.

"I hope you'll have a good time building your factory and I hope you'll hurry up with it, because I shall have to hear about it every day of my life until it's finished."

He smiled at their puzzled faces and perfunctory applause. He stopped to say a word to Mrs. Rafferty as he went out.

After that Doherty made a speech—Betts explained the plans again, in answer to questions. They all crowded up to handle the sketches, and discuss this astounding news. There was a perfect babel of tongues, a roar of talk. Ideas come to them slowly and they had to be told over and over again the simple outline of the project.

The women hovered over the picture of the dwelling house in awed admiration. Joan tried to explain the ground floor plan to them, but that was entirely beyond them. Besides they were satisfied to look at the porch and the tiny gardens.

About five o'clock the refreshments were brought and they all grew embarrassed again, but after the servants had gone, they fell to talking, and consuming the sandwiches, coffee and ice cream.

It was not until six o'clock that they moved to depart. The wagons and motors were filled first with a cheering, happy throng, waving hands and throwing

kisses. Then the men gave three times three cheers for everybody, and marched off down the road singing. The garage was empty except for Dick and Joan, who stood watching them go.

"That's the beginning of the new era, Dick. There goes our happy family."

He laid his arm across her shoulders.

"I've never been so happy in my life," he said simply. "I'm so glad I owe it all to you, Joan."

"Dear boy, you owe it to your own fine self," she corrected him.

"Aren't you ever going to let me tell you how I love you, Joan?" he asked her.

A look of distress crossed her face and he saw it.

"Is it so hopeless for me that you don't want me to say it, dear?"

She faced him squarely at that.

"Dick, my dear, dear Dick, there must not anything come between us to spoil our feeling for each other."

"Joan—I ask you to marry me."

"Dick, you are seventeen and I am twenty-three."

"I don't care what your age is—you are just my whole life."

"You must be as free as air to build Farwell, to go through college, to lay all your foundation stones."

"Couldn't you wait for me, Joan?"

"Dick, when you're through college, I'll be nearly thirty—almost an old woman."

"What's the difference? I don't care, I tell you."

"You're a dear!"

"You don't love me, do you?"

"Not the way you want me to, Dick."

"I knew it—it's Uncle Gregory you love. I saw it that night you made me come back," he cried.

"Dick, that isn't fair!"

He flung out the door and away. She laid her crossed arms on the back of a tall chair, and dropped her face on them. She had tried so hard to keep this crisis in check. Dear loving boy, how was she to help him now? Was her work here finished? Should she pack up and move on?

She scarcely started when Gregory laid his hand upon her shoulder.

"Joan—Joan, dear," he said gently. She lifted her wet eyes to his face.

"I came out to see if the party was over—I entered through the little room—I think you did not hear me—"

"Yes?"

"I—couldn't help it—I heard what Dick said. Oh, Joan, is it true?"

He had heard! He was sorry for her. He thought she expected him to— She forced herself to smile.

"Poor Dick, he was excited—not himself," she evaded.

"Joan, was it true?" he repeated.

She forced herself to look him steadily in the eyes. She would not see the tenderness expressed there—it must be his pity.

"Is it true?" he said again, softly.

"No, Gregory, no—it was not true," she said firmly, finally. Then she, too, ran out the door, and away, as Dick had done.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

**J**OAN fled to her own room, after her decisive talk with Gregory, in the garage. She was trembling all over with excitement. She locked her door, on some absurd impulse, as if the physical act helped her to bar him out of her thoughts.

She went and sat down by the window, where she had sat that first spring morning of her life at the Hall, nearly a year ago. On that occasion she had taken stock of her ideas, faced the compromise she must make between her ambitions and her contemplated mode of life, in this house. She remembered what a sunny morning it had been, how gay and lovely the garden was—how young and undaunted she felt. Today the bare garden held no promise, she had spent many months of storm and stress here, and she felt old and a little tired.

That she had fired Dick to do his work, she knew to be the truth. She had confidence that he would do it well, that he could do it without her. The breach which she felt guilty for, between the two men, seemed about to be closed. There was no more real need for her here.

Her cheeks burned at the memory of Gregory's challenge. He had been generous, taken her back into the circle because of Dick. He knew that Dick would never come back without her. And then that he should overhear those words, that he should misunderstand.

Did he think that she had tricked Dick, by a pretended love, to get him back? Did he feel that she must be rewarded, in such a case? Oh, it was unbearable, the whole situation! She must go away, and find a new job. That was the only solution.

A striking clock warned her that it was near the dinner hour. She came out of her reverie, to cross to the 'phone and say she would not come down to dinner. Then she changed her mind. She telephoned Jake in the village to be at the Hall gate at nine-thirty to drive her to the 10:40 train.

She began to dress hurriedly. She put on the dinner gown which she had acquired for the New York party—because both her men admired it. She took more than the usual pains with her appearance. If this was to be her last dinner with them, she would look her best. She wound about her neck and shoulders, a wonderful green scarf which Dick had given her, and hurried downstairs, her cheeks flushed, her eyes shining with excitement.

The men were in Gregory's den, and dinner was announced, simultaneously with Joan's appearance.

"Joan—you're wonderful!" exclaimed Dick softly.

"Thank you, Dick," she answered tenderly.

Gregory's eyes appraised her with a pang. How could he hope that this glowing young creature could find happiness with him? Dick, young as he was, would come nearer satisfying her.

"Are we dining, or are we not?" she demanded gaily.

Gregory bowed gravely and offered an arm. She took it, and laid the other hand on Dick's sleeve.

"I always feel like a great lady, when I am formally led to dinner," she continued. "It is a hang-over



from my factory days when I read how 'Lord Ronald offered his arm to Lady Clare, who leaned upon it, and thus they entered the vast baronial dining-hall of the Castle.' "

She chattered along until they were seated at the table. Then she described some amusing incidents of the afternoon, which made them laugh. She formally congratulated Dick upon the success of his party. She appealed to Gregory for his opinion.

"It seemed to me a most successful 'at home.' I felt my own remarks to be the only blot upon the occasion."

"Oh, I thought that was a good speech. It was frank and—like you," Joan said. "Wasn't it, Dick?"

"It was all right," Dick granted.

"Much obliged, by the way, for setting me straight with them on the militia business," his uncle remarked.

Dick nodded acknowledgment without any reply. Whereupon Joan captured the conversation again, and made them respond to her leads. She laughed, she teased them, she scolded them, and in due time she led them to the library for their coffee and cigarettes. They were both of them a trifle dazed by her performance. She was usually comfortable, but tonight she was different. She was brilliant, tantalizing. Dick gave her back as good as she gave, but he was miserable, under it all. Gregory could not understand at all. She had never used her wiles upon them, but it almost seemed tonight as if she were deliberately coquetting with them. She had been offered the boy's love and his—she had refused both—then why these provocative fireworks?

At nine o'clock Joan suddenly rose. She said she was tired and would go to her room. They protested,

but she did not listen. She gave them each her hand as she said good night, and she blew them a kiss, as they stood at the foot of the stairs, watching her go.

If they might have seen how old and worn and sad she looked as she took off the white gown and got into her street clothes, they might have understood something of the strain that evening had put on her.

When she was ready to go, she made a tour of inspection of her room, as she had done that first day. Then she took up her little bag, tip-toed to the stairs and listened. She could hear their voices below. She crept downstairs quickly, let herself out the door and hurried to the gate where Jake was waiting.

"Ain't none of them motor cars a-runnin'?" he asked, as she stepped into the buggy. "What do you go rootin' me out of my bed this time o' night fer?"

"Why, Jake, it isn't late," she protested, and engaged him in conversation until they got to the train.

In New York she went to the little out-of-the-way hotel, where she had stayed on her first arrival in the city. The clerk greeted her like an old friend. When she got to her room she made herself comfortable and wrote a note to Gregory:

I was seized with a desire to come to New York, so I ran away. Don't be anxious about me, I am to be with a friend. I am very tired after the excitements of the village, and I want to think about myself for a little while.

Thank you for everything.

JOAN BABCOCK.

She wrote it several times before she let it go. Then she sent a line to Dick:

DICK DEAR:—I've come off for a little vacation. I'm tired. Go ahead with Farwell—Mrs. Rafferty will take my place for

awhile. I never had a brother, Dick—I never could have had a brother, as dear to me as you are!

Affectionately,

JOAN.

To Mrs. Rafferty she wrote that she was to be away for awhile and made several suggestions as to the organizing of the women for their work in the new Farwell. She sent loving remembrances to them all.

When they were sealed and posted, she drew a deep breath of relief. She threw up her window and leaned out over the great city of lights. The early morning air was raw, but she breathed it in, felt it on her head and neck with pleasure. Then she went to bed and slept like a boy in baseball season.

The next morning at eleven she was admitted to the private office of the manager of the Professional Women's Bureau.

"Joan Babcock!" exclaimed Miss Earl, rising to hold out her hand. "How glad I am to see you!"

Joan gripped her hand so that the other woman winced.

"It's good to see you, Miss Earl," she said heartily.

"What brings you to town?"

"I want a job."

"A job? You are through at Farwell?"

"Yes—I think I am through at Farwell," she admitted.

Miss Earl appraised the serious face opposite her. The girl looked older, a trifle worn.

"It was a painful experience I gathered from the last letters—"

"It had both pain and pleasure," Joan answered.

"I was afraid that it was too quiet and conventional

a background for you—but you seemed to make it rather otherwise,” Miss Earl smiled.

“It isn’t a year yet, Miss Earl, since I went to the Hall and yet I feel that my whole life has been packed into these months, so much has happened—within and without,” Joan exclaimed.

“I’m not quite up to date on it, you know,” Miss Earl reminded her.

Joan went over the last chapters of the story of the strike, Dick’s part in the final act of destruction. She described the trial, the boy’s outbreak against the whole economic system, with Gregory as its protagonist. She told how the strikers plotted to kill Gregory, or burn the Hall, or do some sort of damage, the night after the trial, how she and Dick had gone to the rescue. She outlined the plan to rebuild Farwell, she told about the party for the strikers.

She put her own picturesque self into the recital and to Miss Earl it was like a drama, or a moving picture unrolling itself before her. She took in all that was said, much that was unsaid. She read at once Joan’s reason for dragging Dick to his uncle’s rescue, although no hint of it was spoken.

“And so you feel that your work there is finished?”

“I feel that Dick can go on now, without me.”

“And Mr. Farwell?”

“I was never so essential to Mr. Farwell as I was to Dick,” she evaded.

“How did they feel about your coming away so suddenly?”

“I—didn’t tell them, at least, they know now. I wrote them last night after I arrived.”

“You ran away?”

"Yes."

"But why?"

"Because—"

She stopped, her troubled eyes fixed on Miss Earl.

"Don't tell me a word that you may regret," that woman said quickly.

"I do want to tell you—only it is not easy. You see, at the last something happened that I did not want to happen. I had been preventing it for months—"

"Dick fell in love with you," remarked Miss Earl casually.

"How did you know?" questioned Joan.

"Well, it seems the most probable thing, after the crises you had faced together. You are not unattractive, as I suppose you know."

"And Dick is so very young," Joan completed the sentence. "Young lads are so liable to fall in love with older girls—I suppose it was inevitable," she sighed.

"You say you tried to stop it?"

"Yes—I realized the danger months ago. The boy was lonely, and I brought him companionship. He was idle and I brought him work that he liked. I was the first woman he had ever known well, and as you say, we went literally through fire and water together."

"How big a difference is there in your ages?"

"Six years."

"Couldn't it be spanned?"

"I don't love him," Joan said. "He is the dearest boy in the world, but it is ridiculous to dream of my marrying him."

"Poor Dick!" said Miss Earl. "I thought he was a delightful boy."

"He is."

"Why didn't you marry Mr. Farwell?" inquired the naughty Miss Earl.

"The humble factory girl, marrying the rich Earl of the Hall, like they do in books," said Joan, with slightly forced laughter. "One reason, dear Miss Earl, was that he didn't ask me!"

"Hm! You did run away! And what do you intend to do now?" she added.

"I think I'd better be getting at my regular job, don't you? I want to organize women workers—I've seen the need of it so plainly in Farwell. It's the only way for us to get on."

"All right. I can put you in touch with several women connected with trades unions."

Miss Earl went to the filing cabinet and came back with a drawer.

"I wonder if you will pull out a card this time, that is to change my whole life, as that other one did," Joan said.

"I suppose every card in this drawer may change somebody's life," Miss Earl replied.

"Yet you handle them as if they were just cards."

"They are, my dear," said Miss Earl quietly. "Fortunately, I'm not encumbered with too much imagination. If I dramatized my work sufficiently I might lose my courage to go on, changing people's lives, mixing them up, like a busy old Fate."

When Joan left the office to go and call on a Trades Union organizer, she left her address with Miss Earl and promised to have dinner with her on the following night.

Miss Earl gave herself over to thought for several moments after Joan left. She diagnosed the situation

pretty accurately, too. It was therefore no great surprise to her when Gregory Farwell presented himself at her office the next day.

"Miss Earl, I trust you have not forgotten me," he said on entering.

"Not at all, Mr. Farwell. How is your nephew, Mr. Norton?"

"He's well. Has Miss Babcock been here to see you, Miss Earl?" he inquired anxiously.

"I understand that Miss Babcock has left your employ," she evaded.

"She told you that? Oh, I was afraid that was what she meant," he exclaimed.

"I think Miss Babcock feels that she has finished her work at Farwell. She wishes not to outstay her usefulness."

"Her usefulness! Miss Earl, I must see her and have a talk with her. It is not fair to any of us for her to go away like this—" he said earnestly.

"I am not free to tell you where she is, Mr. Farwell, without her permission."

"Then call her up and get her permission. I must see her, Miss Earl," he said brusquely.

She hesitated a second—then went to the outer office and told the operator to call Joan for her. While she waited she tried to chat with Gregory, but he was too impatient to disguise his anxiety. Presently the 'phone rang.

"Joan—this is Miss Earl. Mr. Farwell is here in my office. He is most anxious to see you. I will not give him your address unless you say I may."

She listened, then turned to Gregory.

"She says she wants a little more time, that she will see you some day later—"

He quietly took the 'phone out of her hand.

"Joan—it must be today. It isn't like you to be unfair—to—to hurt your friends," he said gravely. . . .

"I will be there in five minutes," he replied.

"Thank you, Miss Earl," he said briefly, and was gone before she could answer.

The Bureau was looking up as a matrimonial agency, was her inner comment.

Meantime Gregory made his way to Joan's hotel. He urged the taxi driver to top speed. It was only about fifteen minutes later that he went into a queer, stuffy hotel parlour to find her waiting for him. Fortunately it was empty. He took her hands.

"Joan—why?"

"Oh, Gregory—why didn't you let me have a little time to think?"

"Miss Earl says you are looking for a new position."

"She should not have told you that."

"I can't let you do that—dear."

"Gregory—let's sit down on this ugly, hard sofa, and be very sensible."

"I'm not going to be sensible. I am going to tell you how much I love you—how necessary you are to me, like the air I breathe—how desperate I was at the thought of losing you."

"Gregory," she began faintly.

"Why did you run away?" he demanded.

"I didn't want you to be sorry for me—to be chivalrous—isn't that the word?"

"Sorry for you? How could I be, when I adore you. Oh, Joan—Joan—What you have done to me!" he said earnestly. "Can you give me your love, my dear?"



"Gregory, you aren't being influenced by what you heard Dick say?"

"I am only influenced by what you said to Dick."

She questioned that.

"I did not tell you all this when you came back to the Hall, because Dick admitted to me that he loved you, and I wanted the boy to have his chance."

"Dear old Dick."

"You made us both suffer that night you ran away."

"Oh, I didn't mean to. But it was so hard not to break down and cry. I meant it to be my last dinner at the Hall."

"And you were sorry, Joan?"

"Sorry? Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I had been happy there—happier than I had ever been in my life."

"Was it only because of the factory workers that you were happy?" he persisted.

"No—of course not."

"Dick made you happy?"

"Yes—"

"Oh, Joan, can't you be a little kind?"

"My dear—you made me happy there—" she said frankly and tenderly.

He put his arms about her, but she slipped from them resolutely. He looked at her anxiously.

"What is it, Joan?"

"It's—everything."

"Do you love me?"

"I cannot marry you, Gregory. My life is dedicated to work, to helping the people I come from—" she began hurriedly. "I cannot go and settle down at the

Hall, as your wife. I would feel that I had been a traitor to my class."

"Do you love your class, as you call it, more than you do me?" he asked her, puzzled at her evident distress.

"That is what I must decide. That is what I came away to think over."

"I don't understand at all, Joan—but I want to be fair. It seems to me that if a woman loves a man, her place is with him. If she fills his life, gives him children, makes the world better for a happy family, isn't that enough for any woman?"

"Yes, my dear, it is enough for any woman, but not enough for some women. I want to find out which I am."

"Dearest, we can't quibble about this. We love each other, we belong to each other—that is the only thing that counts," he cried to her.

"I wish I could tell you how I feel about love, Gregory. I came across a little poem the other day called, 'The Door.'"

She repeated it to him slowly, softly:

### "THE DOOR"

"Love is a proud and gentle thing, a better thing to own  
Than all of the wide impossible stars over the heavens blown,  
And the little gifts her hand gives are careless given or taken,  
And tho the whole great world break, the heart of her is not  
shaken. . . .

"Love is a viol in the wind, a viol never stilled,  
And mine of all is the surest that ever God has willed;  
I shall speak to her tho she goes before me into the grave,  
And tho I drown in the sea, herself shall laugh upon a wave;

And the things that love gives after shall be as they were before,  
For life is only a small house . . . and love is an open door."

"Somehow it seems as if I could not go into the small house, alone with you, and shut the door. It seems as if love ought to make us so big, so tender that the door must always stand open to all the world. Does that tell you what I mean?"

"A little. It's a part of your modern world, that I have no place in," he sighed. "What is it you want me to do, beloved of my heart?"

"I want you to let me have all the time I need to think this out. If I come to stay with you, Gregory, for ever and a day, I want to come freely and of my own choice. If I decide I must go on with my work, I want to have no regrets."

"You will not come back to the Hall?"

"Not for a while. I can't think clearly when I am with you."

"My dearest!"

"No—please—help me with this. I'll come back in the summer. Perhaps you'll let me bring Miss Earl for the month of her vacation."

"Of course, if you think there should be some one."

Dick plunged through the curtains and into the room.

"Here you are!" he exclaimed.

"Dick!" Joan said, and smiled. He looked so flushed and distressed. "How did you find me?"

"I wrung the name of the place out of that Miss Earl."

"Poor Miss Earl," Joan said.

"I guess it is poor Miss Earl. I nearly scared her to death. She wasn't going to give it to me, so I told her I'd be forced to sit there until you came in again."

"Dick!"

"I thought I'd find you here," he remarked to his uncle.

"You're not disappointed then."

"Are you going to marry him, Joan?"

"I don't know."

"You've got to decide. I've been so upset ever since you left that I haven't done a thing on the plans—"

"Upset, Dick?"

"Yes—I can't go ahead with the thing without you and you know it. I want you to come back and get to work, that's what I want. You started this thing and I think you ought to see it through," Dick said hotly.

"I'm sorry Dick, but it isn't possible—"

Gregory took a turn or two up and down the floor, hands in pockets, head down.

"Go back with him, Joan. I'll take myself out of the picture for such time as you may decide upon."

"That isn't fair to you—" she began.

"Yes—that's the way to arrange it. Consider it settled. The boy's right. He needs you to help swing this big job. We'll get to our affair later."

"That's very like you, Gregory."

"Get your bag then, and let's catch the 2:10. Betts has got some blue prints to decide on this afternoon," said Dick.

Joan laughed.

"All right," she said. "I have to stop at Miss Earl's office on the way."

She was back shortly and they set off for the Bureau. Gregory was to go to the Hall until he settled on his plans.

At the Bureau they went into Miss Earl's office three abreast.

"Miss Earl," said Joan, "I'm caught and I'm being taken back."

"Forcibly?"

"No—willingly."

"Your brief sojourn here has, I may say, been somewhat upsetting to the Bureau," the manager said with a humorous twinkle.

"I know. I do hope Dick didn't—"

"You needn't hope it—he did!"

"Sorry—had to," remarked the culprit.

"You've been very good to all of us, Miss Earl, and we want you at Farwell for a month at least this summer—" Gregory began.

"Cut it short, Uncle Greg. We'll miss the train."

"We're going on the 2:10," smiled Joan.

"I hope you don't miss it this time—" said Miss Earl fervently.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

**B**ACK to the Hall they journeyed. Joan drew a breath of satisfaction when they stepped within its doors again. Gregory caught the significance of her sigh and smiled at her.

"I am not acting on my best judgment at all. I am being persuaded through my affections," she said to him.

"I approve the route your affections lead you," he said gently.

The next few days were a trifle difficult for all three of them, since their relationship had been subtly changed by the emotional crises that had come to them. But Joan led the way with a matter of fact manner which established her intention of keeping emotion of all kinds out of the picture.

Gregory made his leisurely arrangements to go south. He stood by his offer to vacate the field for Dick, during the initial steps of his big task, but now that the time had come, he felt a bit aggrieved at having to exile himself. He watched Joan closely, and if she was aware of any added tenderness in his manner toward her, she made no least acknowledgment. She had said that she could not face her decision about her life, without bias, while he was there. It seemed incredible that this business-like young woman, who surrounded herself with urgent tasks, so that there was never a chance of a tête-à-tête with her, would allow anything or anybody to influence her judgment.

"Gregory, do you want to change your mind about going away?" she said to him. "I can persuade Dick to let me go, I feel sure."

"You still feel that we ought to be separated while you decide?"

"Yes."

"I can't see that I mean any more to you than that table. You treat me with the same impersonality you show toward the table. I should think that any one who had themselves in hand like that—" he began.

"I came back to please you and Dick, you remember."

"I'm going. I shall leave tomorrow," he replied curtly.

"Why don't you stay here and let me move to the village?" she suggested.

"The matter is settled. I go tomorrow and you stay on here and help Dick."

"But I cannot let you go feeling that you have been put out—that you are unfairly treated—"

He looked into her serious-eyed, anxious face.

"Poor little Joan! It's all right. It was my own suggestion, and I go willingly. Only don't be too long deciding, dear. Remember that like the soul of Tomlinson, I shall hover between Heaven and Hell."

"I shall not forget," she replied gravely.

He took her hands and kissed them. It was their real farewell, because she gave him no opportunity for another, up to the time of his departure.

Joan and Dick plunged into the problems of the new village, in earnest now. Every waking minute was spent in some sort of planning, considering, deciding. At meals they discussed nothing else. They fairly dreamed of it by night.

The plans grew into blue prints, in Betts' untiring

hands. Orders were placed for materials to use in the building. Dick and Patsy went to New York to get on the track of a general manager of the new plant, with Patsy to act as foreman. They invited Saunders to go with them to decide on the most modern machinery to be installed. He accepted and they spent days conferring and deciding before they put in their orders.

Dick insisted upon a more up-to-date manager than Saunders had been, but he asked the older man to head the order department. He refused it. He assured them that he knew they were headed straight for ruin. He informed them that the minute you began to favour labour, labour took advantage of you. The boys invited him to visit the factory one year after its new beginning that he might see what modern ways and thoughts could accomplish.

They made mistakes, of course. Their youth and their inexperience might have wrecked the whole project in the end, if, as Joan said, "the Lord had not raised up a man," to help them in their need.

The rumour of their venture had spread through factory circles in the state, and one day a man walked into the offices they had established in Farwell, and offered himself as manager. He was forty-five years old, experienced in the industry, had managed a cotton goods factory in the state and had come up from the ranks himself. He had heard about Dick's plan—it had interested him, and he forthwith presented himself for their service. His name was Frank Sims.

The boys liked him. They looked up his record, found it satisfactory and hired him. They took him about among the men and women workers. He made himself solid with them at once, because he knew their



life and needs. His judgment was, from that time, the compass by which the youthful enthusiasts steered. Sims knew how to sift the grain from the chaff of their ideas, and he never made the mistake of offending them by an attitude of tolerant endurance. He was a thoughtful man, self-educated, a social democrat of solid convictions. He wanted to see all the social experiments tried which could be made practical. He saw that these boys had an idea, plus a feeling for co-operation. He saw a chance here for the workers, he threw his whole energy into the balance.

Late February and March saw the men all employed in gathering and hauling stone for the foundation work. Each gang chose its own foreman from its number, and the work was entered into in holiday spirit.

Joan and Mrs. Rafferty induced the boys to have two men and two women elected by the workers to act as their representatives and to help pass on decisions as to the building and equipping of the factory. This they did and while it made it a trifle unwieldy to have so many on the committee, it proved a very popular move with the people.

The clubs among the women and children were organized. The garden clubs came first. Certain groups were to look after certain things. It was difficult to keep them from beginning long before the ground was thawed. A discussion arose as to the division of the gardens. Since there was no way of knowing now, which family would have which cottage, how could they identify their own gardens?

"But there isn't going to be mine and thine in these gardens. They are to be 'ours,'" Joan explained to them. "We want everybody to have a good garden. We'll start out all the gardens alike, then later it will

be up to each one of you as to which ones do the best. We are all to work together—our factory—our cottages—our gardens—don't you see?"

"But I don't know nuthin' about gardenin'," said one woman.

"Then you are the one we all want to help," Joan said. "Isn't that so, friends?"

They agreed that it was, but none too heartily. This particular woman was a slack, miserable creature, looked down on by her own neighbours. Joan hoped to redeem her, but Mrs. Rafferty was sceptical. It was by no means plain sailing with these women. They had their likes and their dislikes, their cliques and their class distinctions just like every other grade of society. Mrs. Rafferty looked upon Mrs. Kovlatski as little more than a dog—and so it went. They were stupid, work-worn, uneducated folk. They were not waking up in a jiffy to the beautiful doctrine of brotherly love, they were not seeing the light as Joan saw it.

Mrs. Rafferty punctured some of Joan's dreams promptly.

"Ye ain't goin' to make new folks av thim, by jest putting 'em in new houses," she repeatedly counselled. "Polacks is Polacks in shanties, or in model cottages."

"But even Polacks can learn."

"I ain't so sure. There's loafers an' workers, an' the loafers ull live off'n the workers jest the same in good factory towns or bad," said the wise old woman.

"But you don't think there's anything that Patsy and Jimmy and the rest of your children can't learn," Joan said.

"They're Irish—an' smart."

But Joan worked away on her recruits. She managed to inspire them with a desire to get at the digging,

and April, which promised an early spring, saw the garden squads at work. The company provided tools, seeds and fertilizer.

The work of digging up the tough sod of the big plot which had been chosen for the vegetable gardens, did not daunt the foreign-born peasant women at all. The girls who had worked in the factory were not so strong—could not endure so much as their mothers, but old and young worked early and late on the digging, ploughing, fertilizing, and planting of the vegetables. They took turns, certain women serving certain days, with the women at home feeding the children of the absent gardeners. Joan thrilled at what she thought was the birth of a real community spirit, but Mrs. Rafferty scoffed when she spoke of it to her.

May saw the foundations dug, and laid. Joan and Dick organized a ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone. There were speeches and exercises, and the children sang a dedicatory hymn. They did not all fully understand the significance of the occasion, but it was a beautiful day and they enjoyed the holiday and the air of festivity. On the whole, friendly feelings were promoted.

June arrived with perfect weather which favoured them. About the middle of that month a delegation of women visited the office. They asked Dick to take a sufficient number of men off the factory work, to dig the foundations for the first row of cottages. They would work on the mason work of the cellars, and later, in the actual construction, under the direction of a boss. Dick and Sims laughed at the idea, begged them to be patient—the most important thing was to get the factory done and operating. But the women were insistent. The gardens were needing less attention now,

they wanted to be working on their homes. Would the Company experiment with one cottage, giving the women a chance to show what they could do? Dick finally agreed to that, after consultation with his committee. Joan urged it, and work was begun on the first house. As soon as the earth was dug, the place fairly swarmed with women, anxious to work on the cellar. It was done in no time, and the contractor laughingly admitted that it was done well. That settled it. Work went ahead on the cellars of other cottages. The women drew full wages with the men—the children drew a wage scaled to their age and usefulness.

"The women are speeding up the men," Dick laughed one summer night, as he and Joan sat on the terrace, after dinner.

"It's inspiring to me the way they work. They're putting sentiment into the building of their own homes—and muscle. It's appalling how strong those older women are. I have to hold them back all the time, or they would move iron girders and piles of brick."

"I don't suppose there has ever been anything like it in this country before, do you?" Dick inquired.

"Probably not. Oh, Dick, isn't life fun, when you feel that your work counts?"

"You bet it is. I never knew what fun was before."

"It has been a wonderful year."

"Is it only a year? It seems as if you had always been here, Joan, helping us, scolding us, keeping us on the job."

"Sounds awfully unpleasant of me, Dick."

"Unpleasant enough, often, but look where it's got us."

"I wish we could have interested Mr. Farwell in it all," Joan sighed.

"Too late. Uncle Greg got the wrong start. Your start makes such a big difference, doesn't it?"

"Dick, did Mr. Farwell ever tell you where I got my start?"

"No. Does he know?"

"I told him. Haven't you ever wondered about where I came from?"

"Mrs. Rafferty told me you had come from working people. I shut her up, because it was none of my business."

"Good old Dick! I think I'd like you to know. I was born in a cottage in Whiting, Indiana—not much better than the shanties in Farwell. My father worked in the steel mills there. The town is uglier than Farwell—flat, sordid, smokesmothered. The furnaces blaze all day and all night—alternate glare and gloom. There are always accidents—men are always being killed—my father was one of them."

"Oh, Joan!" he exclaimed tenderly.

"He believed in the workingman. He read and studied and wanted to help working conditions. He didn't have any money, and he had my mother and me to think of—so he didn't accomplish anything, except me. But he made me understand that my work was to do what he wanted to and couldn't."

"I see. That's why you care so."

"Yes. My mother was the bitter, enduring kind. She always stands for unorganized labour in my mind. She worked in a factory too. She always had a grievance—she hated the employing class, but she didn't count. Do you see?"

"Yes. What happened to her?"

"She died, an old, old woman at fifty. She was broken-down and worn out—just waste."

"But you, Joan—how did you get your start?"

"I was born a rebel. Naturally enough, since my parents were too, in their different ways. When I was a little girl I made up my mind to get out of the machine that had caught them and ground them to bits. I soon saw that education was the way of escape. So I fought for one and got it."

"I see why it seems so important to you. No wonder you thought I was a criminal to shirk mine. Why didn't you tell me this before, Joan?"

"How I came to be what I am isn't important, is it? What I do with myself is what counts. I wanted so to make you see what responsibility you assumed when you inherited—and my word!—haven't I just tumbled things over right and left?"

"Yes—but I think we'll build something worth while yet."

"So do I. I couldn't go on, if I didn't, Dick."

"When we get the new place finished and running, then what will you do?"

"I'm going to think that out, when I have more time. I'm so busy now with each day's work—" she said hurriedly.

"You ought to get other companies to do as we have here. You ought to go all over the country and get them worked up to it," he cried. "That would be great."

She made no answer to that.

"Couldn't you marry me and let me go, too?" he inquired.

"No, Dick."

"Well, if it isn't Uncle Greg nor me, then you ought

to marry somebody like Sims, who understands the labouring class perfectly."

"But I don't want to marry Sims."

"He's great! One of the finest fellows I ever met."

"I'm sure of it," she agreed, smiling.

"You might go far and do worse. You have to marry somebody. It's too lonesome for a woman all alone."

"It is, rather."

"I'm glad you told me about yourself."

"I sort of wanted to review it."

"Why?"

"Because it gives me a clear view of my work and what I must do."

"No hurry. You've got some job on your hands right here!" he reminded her.

Had he but known, she needed no reminding of that fact. She had said with truth that she needed to call up her past to goad her flagging purpose into action. She managed not to face her problem during the busy day, but with the night, it found her unprotected. Gregory's letters never urged her to decide; they were charming, impersonal epistles which claimed nothing of her.

"I find that without my suspecting it you have managed to somewhat change my point of view about people. I am no longer able to be unaware of them. Since human needs have laid their urgency upon me—since I know what it is to yearn for love, for a wife and children, I find myself drawn nearer to my kind. I look at them and speculate about them. I do not love them, as you and Dick would have me do—but I feel as if we were all sheep, turned into one great pasture, moved by the same desires and wants. . . .

"I don't enjoy being a sheep—it is so undistinguished."

Joan read and re-read his letters. They were more intimate glimpses into his mind than she had ever had. Philosophic, descriptive, sometimes brilliant, they were as expressive as his hands. They brought home to her, with emphasis, the bitter realization of what it would mean to shut out of her life for good all that Gregory Farwell meant to her.

Just how much was a woman's work justified in requiring the sacrifice of the woman's fullest personal life? If she married Gregory and fulfilled what she was beginning to recognize as her heart's desire, must she lose her usefulness in the work she had set out to do? She wondered if this was getting to be more and more of a problem with women who took their work seriously. If only Gregory shared her ambition, how ideal that would be! But, not only did he not share it, but probably he would be unwilling to make any compromise in the matter. It would be all or nothing with him, she believed.

While she was trying to work out a solution for the difficulty she had a letter from Miss Earl saying that she was about to go away for her vacation. Joan suddenly felt the need of that woman's clear thinking and friendly understanding. She consulted Dick, who agreed to a telegram asking Miss Earl to come to them for a fortnight at least.

Ruth Earl came herself as an answer.

When she and Joan drove up to the Hall, set in its gardens, in all their early summer luxuriance of bloom, Miss Earl fairly gasped.

"Oh, I didn't know it was like *this*!" she exclaimed.



"I have always had a vision of Farwell Hall, but it wasn't at all like this."

"It is very beautiful, isn't it?"

"To think of my having sent you here, to run this great palace!" ejaculated Miss Earl, turning to stare at Joan.

"And think of my doing it!" she laughed in answer.

"Yes—think of your doing it," her guest repeated.

It was the beginning of much pleasant companionship for both of the women, and a cementing of their friendship. Miss Earl was deeply interested in the factory experiment.

The first day Joan took her to the new site, they got out of the motor and climbed a slight hill before which the whole scene spread like a panorama. The sound of singing came to them, before they reached the top.

"What is that?"

"It is the men. They almost always sing at their work," Joan answered.

They came to the crest of the hill and looked into the long green valley. The great factory was rising there, its walls growing each day. The men ran over it, like ants at their building, and as they hammered and sawed and plastered the bricks, they sang.

On the low hills that lifted their heads above the valley, were more workers—the women—the beavers, at their home-making. Sometimes they took up the men's song in a treble chorus and shouted it back at them. Beyond, in the garden ground, the children weeded, and collected the bugs off the vines and vegetables. Over the whole scene the sun shone radiantly, the sky stretched its blue canopy, the hills distilled their peace.

The two women stood in silence for many minutes. When Miss Earl turned her face to Joan, there were tears in her eyes.

"How labour is dignified when it is done with joy!" she said.

"Yes, there is the beginning here of something we need in the world, isn't there? See Dick over there on the hill, outlined against the sky? He is like a young prophet come to lead them, isn't he?" Joan answered.

From that moment Miss Earl was absorbed in this experiment. She went among the women and came to know them. She talked with Dick and Joan by the hour at night, about social conditions and labour problems, as she had come in touch with them through her work. She gave them much of her wisdom and her advice. Her enthusiasm over their plan was like a new baptism.

Joan led her to talk of the personal problem of the woman with a big social service to perform.

"Joan, I think that the height of a woman's social service can be measured by the depth of her personal experience and happiness. Don't you believe that a woman who has known the deepest emotions, love of husband, and of child, is better fitted to cope with broad human needs than a woman who has denied these things to herself? Or to whom life has denied them?"

"But if there is no compromise? If one must be sacrificed or the other?"

"I don't believe in sacrifice," said the descendant of a long line of Puritans.

But her words took root in Joan's heart,—maybe there was a way for her to both have love and give love. When Miss Earl left, the evening of the last day of her fortnight, Joan was saying over to herself

her words, as she turned the runabout to go back to the Hall.

"Will you take a passenger?" asked a well-known voice, and her heart began strange antics.

"I came back for a minute or so—do you mind?" he inquired, seating himself beside her.

"No, I think I'm glad," she answered cautiously.

He looked at her, as if he had been long starved for the sight of her. She sped the car forward and on the road outside the town they came upon Dick and Patsy and the whole troop of home-going labourers, men, women and children. They were laughing and talking and whistling and singing—a happy, tired lot. The sun slanted low behind them.

"They do look fit!"

"Here are Dick's happy villagers," said Gregory.

"Yes, they are finding health and happiness and, oh—so many other things!" Joan exclaimed.

"Well, I'm glad. They can thank you for that," he said. "And what have you found in your heart for me, Joan?" he added earnestly.

## CHAPTER XXXV

GREGORY did not leave the Hall again.

"Gregory," Joan said to him, the night of his return, "a part of my deciding had to be done with you away, the rest of it has to be done with you here. Will you stay?"

"Gladly. But isn't that decision made yet?"

"Not quite. If we could let things drift until fall—if we could have a month or two of companionship, like we used to have. I feel that we both have changed, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Would it make you unhappy to spend a month or two getting acquainted with the new Joan Babcock?"

"Do I need to say it would make me happy?"

"You agree, then?"

"My dear—I agree to anything that keeps me near you. Don't send me away again—that is all I ask."

"One thing more. Shall we agree to save sentiment until we know definitely about the future?" she said shyly.

"I don't know how to save sentiment. Every time I look at you, or touch your hand I tell you that I love you. Am I not to look at you, or touch you?"

"You're not to tell me about it in words, please."

"Oh—is that all? That's easy."

"You're a very nice man, Gregory," she admitted, smilingly.

So there began for them a sort of period of probation. Joan was so busy with her work in connection

with the new village, that at first Gregory rarely saw her. But he remedied that by offering himself as chauffeur. Back and forth they went between the village and the Hall a dozen times a day. She fell into the habit of submitting her many problems to him, on these rides. His advice was often at odds with her action, his comments on people were frequently humorous. Joan delighted in the discovery that Gregory and Mrs. Rafferty, bred at the opposite poles of the social scale, shared the same scepticism in regard to poor old blundering humanity. They saw the facts where Joan saw the possibilities, they expressed conviction where she breathed hope. They kept her feet and Dick's, too, on solid ground on many occasions.

In July Dick came to Joan with the suggestion that they take up his work again in preparation for college.

"We can spend the mornings at the village and bone in the afternoon, if you can stand that."

"Certainly."

"I've decided to get in this fall, if I can. Four years is a long time, and I want to get them over and be about my job out here."

"That's the way to talk, Dick."

"I don't think anybody on earth but you could get me ready for exams. But I know it's pretty tough on you to ask it of you, when you're working so hard at this other thing."

"We can manage it all right, Dick, and I'd love to help you," she said simply.

"You're a peach, Joan," he exclaimed with his old-time boyish ardour.

So the days became one busy routine. Breakfast was no longer a leisurely function at nine o'clock. Joan and Dick were off on horses, or in the runabout,

by eight o'clock. They put in the morning at the office or at the works. The business was pretty well systematized by now, with Sims in the office, Patsy and Betts and the contractor in charge of the actual construction. Back to the Hall they went for luncheon and from that time on until four-thirty they worked over Dick's books. Then off he went for an inspection of the day's work on the buildings while Joan rested or drove or rode with Gregory. Dinner at eight, on the terrace—study for Dick, talk for the other two until bedtime.

"Joan, you tireless woman!" Gregory said to her. "This boy will wear you out."

"No, I love it. I wish you could realize how Dick gallops along in his work. It is a business with him now. He is so grown up, Gregory. He brings a man's point of view to it, now. It seems impossible that a year ago he was our lazy, aimless little boy Dick."

"Are you sorry now you've got him 'wakened up,' as you called it?"

"No—I'm glad. He's going to be a fine man."

"You've done well with him, Joan. We all have to admit it. But he absorbs a great deal of your time," he complained.

"Dick is my job just now."

"Are you ever going to get to me?"

She smiled at him.

"I think so."

"I'm a patient man, Joan, but time is fleeting."

"This is Dick's summer, Gregory. Maybe the autumn will be ours."

"Joan!"

"I said maybe."

For the most part he kept his promise that sentiment should be postponed for the time being. On their walks and rides and drives they talked like good comrades, not like lovers. There was much in his world of books and of the mind to which he could introduce her, and she entered there, with the same ardour that characterized everything she did. If he did not share entirely her dream of a democracy based upon business organized for the benefit of the community, and not for the profit of the financier; if he could not see, as she saw, an industrial revolution taking place under their very eyes, which is to shift the emphasis in America, from the capitalist to the producer; if for these and other reasons she thought Dick's experiment more important than he did, at least his love had ground for him new lenses through which to see her. He admired her fine class loyalty, he respected her ideas, and he came to have a sort of protecting tenderness for what he conceived to be her youthful over-confidence in human nature and its ultimate nobility. So the summer days drifted them toward each other.

One of the amusing developments of the summer to Joan was a queer, give and take sort of friendliness that grew up between Gregory and Mrs. Rafferty. On the many occasions when he took Joan to the shanty or called for her there, he acquired the habit of exchanging ideas with the Irish woman. Her directness and her hard common sense, often expressed with her native wit, entertained him very much.

As for Mrs. Rafferty, she had respect for no man, in the servile use of the word, and she gave King Farwell as good as he gave her.

"My belief is, Mrs. Rafferty, that you undervalue men," he remarked, during one of these conversations.

"I've not much av an opinion of 'em," she replied.

"Why not?"

"Well, man has been runnin' the worl-d iver since Adam's fall, ain't he?"

"I suppose he has."

"Well, all I got to say is, *look at ut!*"

"Oh, come now," he laughed, "this isn't such a bad world."

"Ain't ut? Well, it's the worrst wan I've iver been in."

"And you think it's all man's fault?"

"He's runnin' ut, ain't he?"

"Do you think women could run a better one?" he teased her.

"I ain't braggin', but I doubt if they could do worse!"

"Didn't Mother Eve start the trouble?"

"She did not. She et the apple off'n the tree av wisdom, loike the Sarpent told 'er to, an' that would a be'n the ind av ut, if it ain't fer Adam, buttin' in, an' gittin' us all into trouble."

"You think it was all right for Eve to eat the forbidden fruit?"

"Shure—she was strong an' she could stand ut. But it got Adam into an awful mess, an' men have niver got us out of ut since."

"What are you two arguing now?" Joan interrupted them.

"Mrs. Rafferty thinks Eve was a saint!" laughed Gregory.

"Shure, I'm for wimmen," asserted his antagonist.

So, as usual, the discussion ended with laughter. And, as usual, Gregory's amused comment as they drove home was:

"She is a very clever old woman."



"What do you think she said to me, after your last argument? 'If King Farwell 'ud a be'n wan av my byes, with the roight koind av bringin' up, he'd a be'n a roight smart fella!'"

Gregory laughed immoderately at that. Joan had something to attend to at the factory, so they drove up there. As they came in sight of it, they saw and heard the activity. The walls were almost ready for the roof now. They all hoped that January first would see the factory running. They drove up to the building and Joan went in search of the foreman, while Gregory sat in the car and waited for her. The men who passed him smiled and nodded, some of them exchanged a word or two with him. One of the satisfactions of the new régime to him was the attitude of the men toward him. They no longer hated him—he was a part of the new order of things, whether he would or no.

He watched them swarming over the place, he lifted his eyes to where the women and children worked at their share. They were all brown from the sun and rain. They laughed much, and chaffed each other. Had Joan and Dick voiced here a new age? Was the era of personal profit to give place to the era of public gain? Was co-operation, political and industrial, to be the keynote of the future in our country? Were we standing on the threshold?

"Dreaming, Gregory?" Joan asked him, as she climbed in beside him.

"I was, rather."

"About what?"

"Has it occurred to you that we are a nation of individualists, trying to make an antiquated theory of democracy work?"

"Yes. And the friction of these individualists is what cripples our whole scheme. Individualism means self-expression at the cost of everything. Capitalists, at the expense of the producer, and *vice versa*. The result is what happened in Farwell—the energy of the whole community was dissipated."

"You think that if the industries of the country could co-operate with the political and economic power, that we would get rid of this friction, and be more efficient?"

"Certainly, don't you?"

"What are you going to do with me in such a scheme of things?"

"You mean you—the Individualist?"

He nodded.

"We're going to ask you to believe that this old bromide is actually true—that every man has to be supported by his own labour or that of others. Wouldn't you be ashamed, once you realize that, to be an idler, just because you can buy support, without work?"

He thought about that for some time in silence.

"I suppose we'll never get anywhere," he mused, "until the net power of the community is the total power, developed by all the individuals."

"That's the man way of saying it, dear. I say it woman-wise. The net power of the community is love—for that is the ultimate power, that makes men work together for common ends. Fraternity is the net power."

"I am beginning to understand the miracles love can work," he said, turning to her. "You've taught me that."

"No more than you've taught me."

"Joan!"

"Why should I wait any longer to say 'I love you,' Gregory?" she answered him.

The machine stopped suddenly.

"My dear love!" he said.

A long time afterward, she said to him, "You didn't let me finish my sentence."

"You didn't need to—I understood the rest."

"Dearest, do you? Do you understand that if I come to live in the Hall for ever, that my prayer of thanks for your love—for my home—must be my work? I must go on with it, Gregory. It will take me away from home, from you, often, sometimes for long periods maybe— Will you take me in spite of that, my lover?"

"I'll take you on your own terms, my Joan. I must find my work, too. I know you could not respect the old Gregory, because he was a slacker. We must find you a new Gregory."

"I could not love a new one more!"

"I cannot work with the human end of it, as you do and as Dick does. I don't love people as you do. I never shall, my dear. But there are mental problems in the big adjustments ahead where I may find my usefulness. Don't you believe that?"

"Thoroughly. The mind, and the heart, they are part of our net profit, Beloved! We all contribute what we have."

So they faced their future, these two, in mutual respect and understanding.

In September, the factory gained its roof, amidst loud rejoicings. Dick went off to take his entrance examinations, and Gregory and Joan went about in a sort of

daze of happiness. Joan had promised Dick a daily report of progress at the factory, during his week of absence, and her days were full to the brim.

In due time Dick returned, and two weeks later his examination returns came. He had passed in a sufficient number of subjects to admit him, with conditions. The family celebrated the event with an evening in New York.

They went to the restaurant where they had been merry before.

"Was it in this life, we came here?" Gregory inquired of them

"Yes. But before, our three lives were all tied up in one blessed tangle," Joan smiled.

"We were tied up then, too, all right. Only we didn't know it," Dick remarked.

The next days Dick and Joan spent in shopping. He was getting ready for his autumn semester, she for her wedding, which was to take place at the Hall the night Dick left for college. They were very gay over their purchases. Gregory sometimes met them at luncheon, and laughed at their bargains.

Each morning Dick had Patsy on the long distance wire, to get a full report on the work in Farwell.

"Worse than a mother absent from her first born," teased Gregory.

The first perfect days of autumn came, and with them a period of relaxation and close companionship for the three of them. Dick's preparations for departure were all made, the next three months at the factory planned out, the business organized. So he was at peace in his mind about that.

From the first, when Joan told him that she loved Gregory and was to marry him, Dick had achieved the

perfect brother devotion. He showed her his affection, told her of it, but always as his uncle's wife-to-be.

The two men had gotten onto a comfortable plane again, each understanding the other better. Then their common love for Joan was a bond.

So they spent the red and yellow autumn days in the saddle, or touring the countryside. Days of comradeship long to be treasured in memory.

The wedding preparations were to be of the simplest. First they decided to ask nobody to the ceremony but Miss Earl. The day before she telegraphed a heart-broken message, because she could not come.

"Isn't there some other woman you would like to have, dearest?" Gregory inquired.

"Mrs. Rafferty," she laughed.

"Why not?"

"It would hurt so many feelings in the village—"

"Have them all, if you want to."

"Gregory—you don't mean it?" she cried.

He stared at her—then smiled.

"Dear, foolish creature, do you want them at your wedding?"

She went to stand in the circle of his arm.

"You see, Beloved, they are my family," she explained.

"We'll have them, dear heart," he said tenderly.

So the invitations went out to the village, to the delight of Joan and Dick and the utter satisfaction of the workers. Not even the smallest child sent regrets.

Gregory and Joan and Dick, with the minister, stepped onto the terrace, in one of the gardens, brilliant now with the last flare of autumn flowers, at sunset time. The whole village in its best was massed on the terraces below. Back of them the trees flaunted

their glory, like a wedding garment. Back of them the hills, yellow-brown, now rose to prick the horizon line, tinted with the sun's late rays.

As they stepped up to take their places before the clergyman, Joan's eyes swept the familiar, much loved scene, came back to the affectionate faces lifted to them from below, rested at last on Gregory's dear face, with its tender smile. Her eyes and her heart were full, as she laid her hand in his.

The celebration afterwards was always hazy in Joan's mind. That everybody shook hands and wished her happiness, she knew—that affection surrounded them. She had a recollection of dancing on the lawn, and the shouts as they filed off homeward in the twilight.

She remembered Dick's coming to them with his bag in hand.

"Well, Jergens is here. I'm off. I suppose you two won't miss me much."

"On the contrary, we shall miss you all the time, my dear, dear Dick—" she had said, bending his head to receive her kiss.

"Good luck, old dear," he had whispered to her brokenly. "Good luck, Uncle Greg!" and then he was gone, and she was alone with Gregory, her husband.

Hours later, she wrote a little note to Ruth Earl:

MY DEAR—

This is my wedding night, and I want to send you just a line of gratitude for what you have made possible for me. You began the story of Joan Babcock; now you must begin the story of Joan Farwell.

Gregory is walking on the terrace below, to finish a cigar, so I have only a moment. You said that "the height of a woman's service could be measured by the depth of her personal experi-

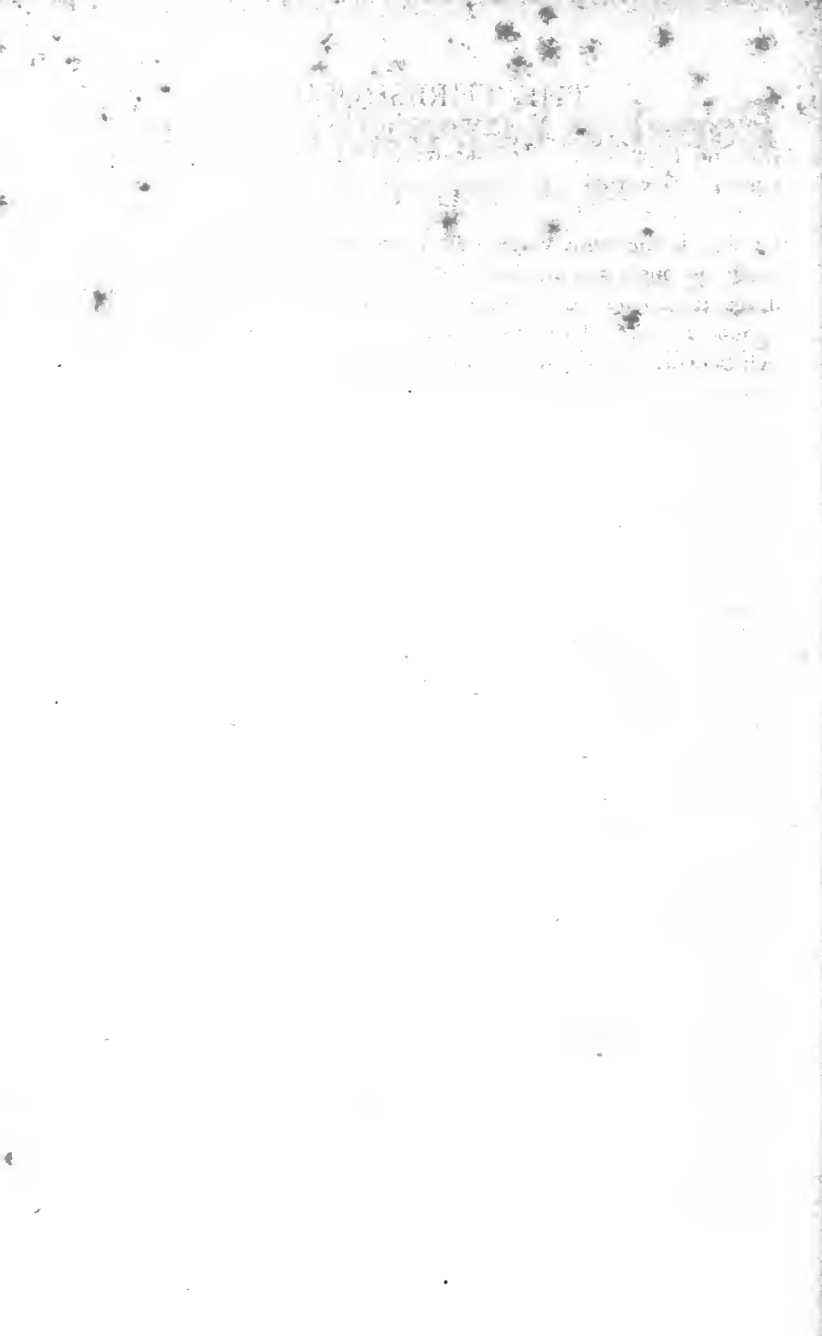
ence and happiness." If that were true, dear friend, I could redeem the world!

I have no more doubts about my loyalty to my work—I know this way is the right way—that I am sent to do certain things, which no one else can do—that I shall not depart until those things are accounted unto me. So my heart is at peace.

Good night, and thanks. God bless you and bring you some such benediction of joy as I know this night.

JOAN.

THE END





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